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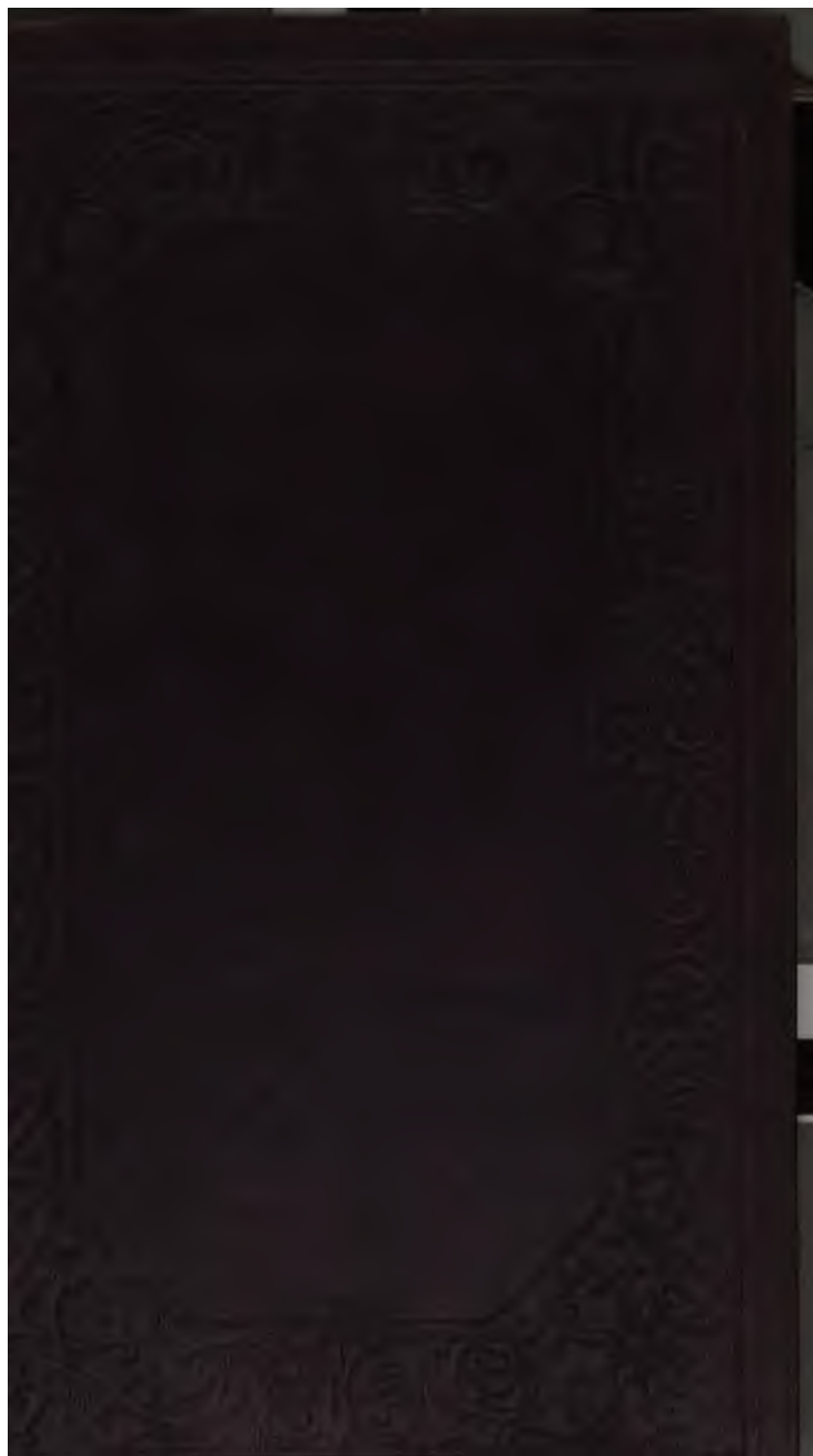
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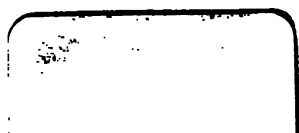
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ALICE WENTWORTH.

"For he through sin's long labyrinth had run,
Nor made atonement when he did amiss;
Had sigh'd to many, though he lov'd but one,
And that lov'd one, alas! could ne'er be his."

CHILDE HAROLD.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.



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ALICE WENTWORTH.

CHAPTER I.

Wild Darrell is an altered man.

SCOTT.

ONE fine afternoon, something more than six years from the period at which this tale commences, an English lady and gentleman were returning leisurely from a short country walk, to their temporary abode in one of the smaller German watering-places, which hap-

pened to be a good deal frequented that season. The lady, who looked somewhat older than her companion, had a slight and elegant figure, though below the middle size; but her walk was languid and her whole appearance was rather contrasted with, than suited to, the youthful gaiety of her dress, and the elaborate arrangement of the fair ringlets which overhung cheeks whose bloom had departed, though the pretty and delicate features they surrounded still retained that conscious expression too often seen in the faces of those who are, or have been, a great deal admired.

The gentleman, whose rough shooting dress rendered the lady's gay attire yet more conspicuous, possessed remarkable beauty of person and features: dark brown hair, which

had curled in early youth and still waved; deep blue eyes, equally expressive of reflection and feeling as of animation; and a clear but somewhat sunburnt complexion. He might be three or four and thirty. His countenance was habitually grave, occasionally to the degree of sternness; and he gave but a divided attention to his companion's observations, being apparently more interested in watching, calling, and whistling to a large dog, which accompanied him.

At length the lady remarked in a somewhat complaining tone, that the creature was sure to find its way home after them, and that he might as well answer her question.

"What was it you wanted to know?" asked he.

"Whether you have sent that letter?" she inquired.

"Put it into the post before you came out."

"So it is gone!" observed she.

"Yes; what makes you say that? You knew it was to go."

"And you declined entirely?"

"Certainly; there was nothing else to be done, as you so much disliked being left for six weeks."

"Yes," replied the lady, "but I thought you might have found it possible—might have managed to express—that—you had no wish to decline—if your uncle—"

"Would do what I know perfectly well he never will do!" interrupted the man, hastily. "I should have thought you might have

understood by this time, even if I had not spent an hour last night in talking to you about it, that it is far more dignified, that it puts one in a far better position not to thrust one's self on those who do not wish for one's company, but to take only what is freely offered when that occurs; and it is less unlikely to occur if no over eagerness is displayed. You know how glad I should be to take you to my uncle's; not that I think there would be much pleasure in it either for you or for me, but I should be truly happy for the sake of the children."

"Then why, as you do not mind giving the thing up altogether, why not make the trial? You would be no worse off than you are!"

"Considerably worse off by exposing my-

self to a humiliating refusal when I can avoid it ; and possibly worse off in another sense too ; for what is the use of deliberately offending a relation, who has it in his power to make me feel the effect of his good will or the reverse ?”

“But you know you must be his heir, now both his sons are dead,” said the lady.

“There is no *must* in the case,” replied he. “My uncle’s property is not entailed, or settled in any way, but by his own pleasure ; and (though I bear his name, and he was strongly attached to my father) I have plenty of cousins—Sandfords and Thorntons—nearer to him in one sense—among whom he is perfectly free to choose his heir, as I dare say he will. I did think that his asking me and my eldest boy to visit him this

summer, might lead to more in various senses, and I was therefore desirous of accepting. But you showed so much annoyance that I have given it up. I verily believe you have changed your mind now that the letter is gone !”

“No, I have not changed it at all ; for now, I see there can be no chance of your uncle’s doing anything he is not obliged to do for you, as you feel so certain he would refuse what he must know you would wish beyond all else.”

“Of course I cannot be absolutely—thoroughly certain,” answered he ; “but I do not mean—”

“Then if you are not absolutely certain,” interrupted the lady, “I cannot understand why—”

“No, you never will understand any-

thing !” said he ; “ it is in vain to think of it. You can no more understand my feeling now than when you wondered, before we left England, at my not choosing to apply to my uncle for assistance. I would fifty times sooner have gone to prison ! But you think all that nonsense, and I cannot help it. Ask favours of a man I have displeased and disappointed ?”

These last words were uttered in a low but angry tone, and the speaker’s countenance assumed so gloomy an expression, that his companion ventured not a word more on the subject they had been discussing. Her attention was soon drawn away by the approach of two ladies, whose exterior was not as familiar to her, as was that of most of the visitors at the Brunnen.

One of the strangers was a middle-aged

woman, of lady-like appearance, but not otherwise peculiar. The other was much younger, though not in the very first flower of youth; tall and majestic in her carriage, in face noble and striking. Her countenance was serene, her eyes large and bright, her jet-black hair lay in shining braids on her forehead, and her dress was only remarkable for its tasteful simplicity.

“Who can these be?” exclaimed the lady whose conversation we have been relating, to the gentleman who was again employed in looking back and calling to his dog; “do not mind Carlo now; do look at these people.”

He complied; and just as the ladies came up, the younger of them coloured slightly; bowed courteously to him, and passed on.

He seemed spell-bound by amazement, and barely returning her salutation, stood still for a moment, involuntarily dropping his companion's arm, which she, however, placed again within his, and he led her on at a quick pace without immediately answering her repeated question of:

"Who is that? Who is it, Arthur? cannot you tell me?"

"It is a Miss Wentworth."

"What! the heiress?"

"Yes."

"The same I used to hear about six or seven years ago?"

"I suppose so."

"And you know her?"

"I did know her."

"Well, she is very handsome for an

heiress. I wonder she is Miss Wentworth still."

"So do I."

"I had no idea she was such a fine woman—for it is more that, than pretty, that she is; but we used all to think she would have done so nicely for Alfred if he had had the sense to look after her, instead of throwing himself away on that wretched little Anna Villiers."

"Alfred look after Alice Wentworth!" exclaimed Arthur Darrell (for, as may have been guessed, he and his wife were the pair whose persons and discourse have been described); and something contemptuous in the tone with which he uttered the words, impelled Lady Emily to ask: "Why he should not, as well as any one else?"

“Oh, no reason!” answered he, “if he had a mind to be refused; none in the world.”

“Why? was she so desperately particular?” inquired the lady.

But they were by this time on the threshold of their home, and Darrell observed that Carlo had not followed them after all.

“So,” added he, “I must see after him; but you had better go in, for it will rain directly.”

She accordingly did so; and he, meeting with the dog before he had walked many yards, brought him to the house, into which he turned him, while he himself remained lounging without for some time.

“What chance has brought her to this

spot of all others?" said he, to himself. "Yet there is nothing surprizing in it. My uncle's letter mentioned the likelihood of her going abroad on a month's tour, as at this time, which would have suited me exactly for my visit to him, had I been allowed to pay it. How little the six years have told on her! She is changed, indeed; but it is a change of beauty, no fading. She is less slender, more stately than in those days; has less brilliancy, more softness. I trust she is only passing a day or two here, on her way elsewhere, as so many do!"

While these and other thoughts ran through his mind, the clouds grew darker, and the threatened rain commenced. Still he did not seek the shelter of the house;

but stood leaning on a sort of outer railing, till he was interrupted in his reverie by a handsome young man of five or six and twenty, who dismounted at his door, and exclaimed as he alighted :

“What on earth are you standing to be rained on for, Darrell? You have not got on much that will spoil, to be sure ; that is one comfort.”

“Yes, Horace,” replied Darrell, “it is a comfort ; and one I mean to enjoy, come what may ; but as you are not in quite as happy a predicament,” added he, glancing at his friend’s somewhat dandified exterior, “you may as well make haste in, and not stand looking at me till you are damaged yourself.”

“The rain is a horrid bore,” replied his

brother-in-law (for such he was), "and ruins half one's evening ; but I am not going to stand out in it ; no more will you, if you are a reasonable being," and they both entered the house, where they found Lady Emily stretched on a sofa ; three or four children, the eldest of whom was little more than five, were playing around her under the care of two nurses, while their mother every now and then besought them in a fretful tone not to make such a dreadful noise.

Darrell sat down to read an English newspaper ; while Ferrers established himself at the window. When, however, the children had been at length dismissed, a conversation began between Lady Emily and her brother, which, as it proceeded, drew Darrell's attention from his paper.

“So you have seen her, too, Horace?” asked she.

“Not before this morning, when Wharton showed her to me in the *Kursaal*. Was it there you had your sight of her?”

“No,” replied his sister, “it was as we were coming in, an hour ago. It was only a glimpse. I saw a new face; but could not make out who she was. Do you think she is going to stay long?”

“No, they say she and her friend are off to Baden the day after to-morrow. I know I wish *I* was at Baden! one may find something to do there. But this is the dullest hole I ever was in; and one must do everything at the absurd hours those stupid German doctors have settled, on pain of being

starved ! What ever made you come here I cannot think."

"Why, I was sure I never should get really well at Lausanne, and I could not get Arthur to take us to Carlsbad, which I had set my heart on, so I thought this was better than nothing. But if you like it, why should not you go to Baden ? What is to prevent you ?"

"Oh, perhaps I shall ! But it is no use, you know, in the sense I believe you are meaning."

"I have no particular meaning," said she.

"Yes, you have," replied her brother, "and not a bad meaning, either ; and I asked Dalrymple to introduce me (he knows her pretty well) ; but I wish you had seen his

face. 'Could not presume,' 'Did not stand in that sort of intimacy which could authorize him.' Would not do it, in short. Miss Wentworth is a greater lady than the Queen, I can tell you. I dare say I may go to Baden all the same; for I confess I am dead tired of being here."

"Well," answered his sister, "Arthur knows her, if that will do you any good; it was he who told me who she was this evening."

"Do you mean knows her to speak to?" asked Ferrers, eagerly.

"Do you really know her, Darrell?" said he, turning round to him.

"I knew her some years ago," answered Darrell, without raising his eyes from the paper.

"Yes; but you know her now, and

she knows you," said Lady Emily, "for she bowed when she met us. But you never told me what makes you think she is so wonderfully particular."

"Her being Miss Wentworth at this time of day is proof enough," replied he; "but it is years now since I have seen anything of her."

"Oh!" cried Horace, "Wharton has been telling me about her, and about every one who has wanted to marry her, and whom she wanted to marry. She has looked very high, he says; but there have been things she could not manage. When first she came out, her notion was to be Marchioness of Kingsbury, and it was a very near thing; but he jilted her to marry that German Princess. Stupid of him, I should say;

but so it was, and she was a good deal disappointed. Then whether it was pique or fancy, or what I do not know, she quite flung herself at Ralph Harrington—you remember him of course—and a famous thing for Harrington it would have been. I believe they were engaged for a week ; but you see she has a pack of uncles and aunts, poor thing ! I don't suppose she would mind them as much now ; but they all leagued together against Harrington, and got at dreadful stories about play-debts—not that I believe there was anything really against him, you understand—and she was persuaded to give him up. I don't remember the next story. But since then she was very near marrying an Austrian fellow, Prince something or other—the name has

gone out of my head—that went off upon religion. Why the man could not have the sense to turn Protestant, and live in England, where he would have been far better off than in his tumble-down castle in Hungary, I cannot imagine. The last thing Wharton told me about her, was, that she had agreed to marry that ugly shrivelled old stick the Duke of Swalesdale ; but she backed out of that at the last, and I confess I am not surprized.”

“It is strange for all that,” observed his sister, “that she has never married.”

“Oh !” rejoined Horace, “it is not so strange, if you consider. Heiresses have so many whims ; and this girl wanted to have everything, money and rank as well as all the rest. I dare say she has come to her

senses a little by this time. Some people would tell you that she does not mean to marry at all; that is stuff of course; and I am inclined to be of Wharton's opinion, which is that at this time of day, any good-looking fellow, who had some 'nous,' and a few favourable opportunities, might have her without much trouble, as she has had the wit to find out there would be no great satisfaction in either mummies or foreigners."

During this speech Darrell turned the newspaper inside out—folded it—unfolded it again; and then crumpled it together with such evident impatience that Horace noticed it and said:

"How angry you always are, Arthur, if one does but talk of a man's chances! What can it signify to you?"

As he spoke, he moved again towards the window, and perceiving that the rain had ceased, exclaimed :

“ But what is the use of sitting yawning here ? There is always something going on, such as it is, even at this pretence of a *Kur-saal*, if one is not too late. Do let us all three get up, and go there at once.”

“ You can go if you have a mind, Horace,” said Darrell ; “ but I have no fancy for it to-night. It is all very well to turn in there for half an hour as one comes back from one’s last walk ; but as the rain has hindered that, I would rather stay where I am ; and I am sure Emily is not up to it.”

“ I do not think there will be a creature there to-night,” said she ; “ it would not be worth while putting on my bonnet.”

“Horridly lazy you both are!” replied Horace. “I wish you would come though. I have a great idea there will be some people there, in spite of the rain. I heard Miss Wentworth say to Dalrymple this morning that she and her friend meant to go to-night to see what the thing is like; and if she goes, other people will. Dalrymple for one; Wharton is sure to be there, and more besides. But if you are not feeling well, Emily, you can stay; only I must have Arthur, so get your hat.”

“No, for I am not going.”

“No!” cried Lady Emily. “I wish you would! I believe it would do me all the good in the world to go; the evening has been so long.”

"Well," replied her husband, "you can go with Horace."

But this was by no means what Horace intended ; and he again tried his powers of persuasion on his brother-in-law ; but in vain. Lady Emily then said :

"You see he will not go ; and it is very tiresome ; but I shall be ready in a minute, Horace."

"Yes, but I am afraid, Emily, I cannot take you, since Arthur won't stir, for you see Wharton will be wanting me to give him his chance again ; and, perhaps, he and I, and one or two others, may go off to his lodgings to have a quiet game ; so I should not well know what to do with you."

"I wish you would come, Arthur," cried

she beseechingly ; but to her surprize, for her wishes of the kind were generally complied with, her husband kept to his purpose, repeating :

“That he was not going—would not move from the house that night,” till she desisted from her entreaties, and Horace took up his hat and departed. When he was gone, Lady Emily complained of Darrell’s unkindness in refusing to accompany her brother :

“For,” proceeded she, “it is not on my own account, you know, that I wished you to go out to-night ; and, of course, you understand why poor Horace wanted you. I must say, Arthur, you have been anything but obliging.”

“I am not going to pretend I misunderstood him,” said Darrell, “for it was precisely

what determined me to stay here. He may get himself introduced to Miss Wentworth if he can, and if he likes ; it signifies little enough ; but I will not be the introducer."

"That is the very thing that is so unkind !" exclaimed she, with tears in her eyes. "You are always behaving as if you were ashamed of my brothers !"

He did not defend himself from the imputation, which was indeed no imaginary one ; for his connection with the Honourable Richard, Alfred, and Horace Ferrers (not to speak of the eldest brother, Lord Northleigh, and of Lady Wilmington) was one of the perpetual thorns which his marriage with Lady Emily had planted in his side. There was no use, however, in entering into explanations on such a subject. So he rose

up, left the room, and betook himself to a cigar, which he smoked outside the house till bed-time.

When the three met at breakfast next morning, Lady Emily' inquired of her brother :

“ If there had been as many people as he expected at the *Kursaal* ?”

“ There were not many,” said he, “ but the party was select.”

“ You mean Miss Wentworth and her friend were there ?”

“ Yes, they were. She's a deuced fine woman ! a pill one might swallow without gilding ; and she is good-natured too—quite easy to get on with.”

“ Then you spoke to her, did you ?”

“ Yes, for some little time.”

“ But who introduced you ? ”

“ Why, no one exactly ; but something fell off her *châtelaine*, which I picked up and presented to her. Then, as she was thanking me, I spoke to Dalrymple, whose arm she had ; and as he named me, I was as good as introduced. I could hardly get away from them that minute ; I was mixed up with their party ; and I am not sorry I have made the acquaintance, for she is very agreeable, I must say. I do not think Dalrymple was best pleased, somehow. I see he is regularly spoony, besides its being such a good thing, if he could manage it ; but he can't ; those sort of fellows have not pluck enough. It must be owned she has a splendid figure, and is altogether very handsome.”

"When she was younger, I dare she was much more so," observed Lady Emily.

"That does not always follow," said Horace; "but such as she is, I think most people would put up with her: do not you, Darrell? Tell me though, if you can, for I believe you remember her coming out, what is her age, as nearly as you can say?"

"Alice Wentworth will be," answered Darrell, slowly, "will be twenty-nine next December."

"So much as that! She does not look it. I should have taken her for twenty-six, at the outside," said Ferrers.

"Well, Arthur," cried Lady Emily, somewhat triumphantly, "you see Horace has done his own business."

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“I have not the least objection,” replied he.

“One does it always best one’s self, when one can contrive it at all,” said Ferrers, complacently; “and I do not spite you for not coming with me last night, I assure you, though I know why you would not; but it is all one now—and I am to go with them on a sort of—not pic-nic exactly—but an expedition to see some ruins in the Birkenthal, if that is the right name of the place we rode to, on Thursday, Darrell. They were puzzling over the exact whereabouts of the thing, and neither Dalrymple nor Clinton could give much information; so I offered to show them the way. I could do no less. You might as well come too, Darrell. It is not enough of a party to require a regular invi-

tation. I have no doubt they would be very happy to see you ; and you know Dalrymple, I believe ?”

“Thank you,” answered Darrell ; “ but I think you will all do very well without me. I shall not ride to-day.”

“ Well, as you please ; only you have often said how dull you have found this place (and it is perfect ditch-water) ; so it struck me you would not do badly to take part in what little there is going on ; as you will not play, and cannot have your chamois-hunting and grebe-shooting, or whatever it is that you regret Lausanne so much for.”

“ Much obliged,” said Darrell, “ but I am not sociable to-day.”

“ Nor ever are,” said Lady Emily.

“ You do not want me to be more so,

do you ?” asked he ; for she had sometimes shown great annoyance at his joining similar parties in which she was not included.

“ No, I do not mean that exactly ; but there is a medium, you know.”

Ferrers presently went out “ to see his friend Wharton, before the riding-party ;” and when he had left the room, Darrell exclaimed :

“ He is on a wild-goose chase ! but I don’t care, so that he doesn’t come to me for money to speed him on with it. One thing, I have none for him ; and I believe he knows that at last.”

How the expedition to the Birkenthal prospered, is not recorded ; it was probably successful enough, as Horace Ferrers was not without a certain genius or arranging

and guiding such plans; and the day was a fine one.

Next morning it was known in the little watering-place that Miss Wentworth and Mrs. Fitzgerald had departed (as was said) in the direction of Baden; to which place Horace Ferrers conveyed himself before many days were over, leaving Arthur Darrell to enjoy as he might an undisturbed *tête-à-tête* with Lady Emily.

Whatever had been his original attraction to her, any charm or fascinating influence she might have possessed had been long worn out, without being replaced by warm friendship, or truly confidential intercourse. Lady Emily Darrell was said by most people to be "the best of the Ferrers;" and such as she was, it is true that she afforded a

less glaring mark for scandal than the rest of her family. She had by no means the vicious inclinations which had made Lady Wilmington and another nearly as disreputable sister, by-words for everything that is held in contempt; and had her first husband (who was suitable to her in age, and whom she had accepted with pleasure) sufficiently estimated the force of bad example on a vain and weak nature, unimproved by any moral culture or right principle; and had he, therefore, put some check on her intercourse with her own family, she would probably have gone through life without falling under any worse reproach than that of being a silly, frivolous woman. He did not, however, think fit to do so; and after the first few years of their mar-

riage, during which time Lady Wilmington had chiefly resided on the Continent, it did not occur to him that her return to England could in any degree affect the peace or honour of his household; and he allowed his wife to frequent her sister's house, where she was exposed to such an atmosphere of folly and profligacy as soon stifled whatever good feeling, or home affections she possessed, while it called forth all the vanity and levity of her disposition.

How it ended, we know; but many thought that her elopement with Darrell, publicly as it blazoned her for an adulteress, was a lesser evil (since by its consequences it removed her from the opportunities and incentives to farther guilt) than the life into which she could hardly have failed

to sink, had her first step in vice remained undetected.

She was in the beginning exceedingly grateful to her lover for his readiness to make her all the amends in his power for her loss of wealth and position, not only by marrying her, but by sharing her compulsory seclusion in a degree to which few would think themselves bound.

As time went on, however, she was sensible of a disagreeable change in being the wife of a poor instead of a rich man, and in being thrown chiefly on her own resources instead of being entertained by constant society and expensive amusements. She had now no temptations to her old sins of coquetry; for between indifferent health, several children, and straitened

circumstances, she had entirely lost the kind of vivacity which used to impel her to every kind of imprudence. An extravagant love of dress was all that remained of this part of her character.

On the other hand, she had become habitually discontented and complaining ; and moreover, her husband discovered what need not have greatly surprized him, namely, that she was possessed of no more general elevation of feeling or sense of honour than was to be expected from her previous conduct in other respects, or from the utter moral degradation of those with whom she had chiefly lived. It should not have surprized him ; yet it came upon him as a shock to find his wife far from truthful, and to see himself forced to watch her

dealings narrowly in order to preserve his own reputation for uprightness and honour, of which, notwithstanding his other failings, he had always been jealous and careful. His standard of a woman's qualities had been taken—not from the society in which he had passed too much of his time, but from the straight-forward conduct he had uniformly witnessed in his mother and his cousins, not to speak of Sophy Langdale and Alice Wentworth. Nor had it once occurred to him, till his lot was inextricably bound up, with that of one so different to those friends of other days, that he could ever have in his own household, and as his own permanent companion, a person whom the slightest fear of blame tempted to falsehood, and whom the lack of any accustomed

luxury led into unscrupulous conduct in money matters.

Her father, the late Lord Northleigh, was a man who, utterly disgracing his rank and education, had transgressed all points of worldly honour as much as the precepts of morals and religion; and was said never to have paid any debt but on compulsion. His children grew up in like habits, and Lady Emily, whose faults of this kind were in abeyance so long as she was the indulged wife of an extremely wealthy man, recurred to them the moment that comparative poverty pressed on her.

This account may serve to explain why no congeniality could exist between her and Arthur Darrell, who had been originally bred in a different school, and whose views and

feelings, if not his practice, had run in a totally different channel. It was true, as Philip Bramstone once said of him, "that he had strong affections," and therefore whatever were the origin of their tie, he would have become deeply attached to Lady Emily, had she been capable of inspiring attachment in any one of a higher nature than her own; or even had she possessed pliancy and tact enough to conceal from him the meanness, his contempt for which she was unable to understand, though she continued in spite of her querulous manner to feel as much affection for him as it was in her to feel. There was, besides, a total, and perpetually recurring difference of opinion between them on the subject of society. The lady

being constantly desirous of making every acquaintance in her power, however indiscriminately, on the plea "that it was often possible by means of persons who had themselves escaped banishment from society rather through good luck than good conduct, to obtain the countenance of others, whose reputation as well as rank, stood high." While her husband, though allowing the occasional truth of her assertion, declared, "that a half admission into the company of one's equals was dearly bought by mean advances, and by forming intimacies with such as are often more corrupted than those whom the world has visited more severely with its public censure. He and his," he said, "should rather live in solitude and obscurity for ever, than

have anything to say to the sort of people to whose advances she would often have been willing to reply."

Such being the state of things, it was matter of wonder to his acquaintance that Arthur Darrell, still young and handsome, not formerly supposed to be very scrupulous, and evidently finding little pleasure in his home, did not seek it elsewhere, either in the fullest sense for which the expression may stand, or in the more restrained acceptance of joining, when opportunity offered, in that general society of his equals, from which his wife was debarred. He did neither the one nor the other. Whether it were, as some conjectured, that he was utterly removed from what might have proved tempting to him at

that time of day; or that he had resolved, out of pride or principle, never to give Lady Emily the least handle or excuse for conducting herself while bearing *his* name, in a fashion to disgrace it; or that the mortifications he had had to endure since his connection with her had inclined him to a love of solitude bordering on moroseness, which was quite opposite to his natural disposition, his conduct in this respect was unvarying. It might be, that his reformation under decidedly unfavourable circumstances, had to do with much that was not likely to be known or regarded by his old companions in their speculations on him. He was one of those persons, who, though far from incapable of reflection, have led too much of a spoilt child's

life, ever to use that faculty till such time as, usually too late for their happiness, some great blow or singular event forces them into a serious train of thought.

The severe illness which had threatened his life not six weeks after his elopement with Lady Emily, the boundless affliction then shown by his mother, amid the greatest tenderness and indulgence, her entreaties, often disregarded before, that he would so use the life granted to her prayers, as that it should be no longer offensive to God, and hurtful by its ill example to man; joined to the sense of responsibility, which for the first time obtained its due power over him, when he felt that the destiny and prospects of others hung mainly on his conduct—all these things may be supposed to have

worked for good, on one who had never wanted sensibility, and whose mind had not yet been corrupted beyond power of amendment.

. His affections were centred in his eldest child, a boy of a most attaching disposition, and engaging countenance; while his chief amusement was derived from such field-sports as may be met with by those who seek for them in some districts of Switzerland, the Pyrenees, &c.; and as it was not society, either English or foreign, that was his object in choosing any temporary abode, he cared not how much out of the usual beat, nor sometimes, as his wife complained, how far from every convenience of civilized life, he pitched his tent, so it were within reach of the only pursuit for which he seemed to retain his old eagerness.

The visit to the — Brunnen, where nothing of the sort was to be obtained, had, therefore, been something of a sacrifice for him : and he felt it still more so after having been induced to refuse the invitation to England, which he thought would have filled up the time of Lady Emily's drinking the waters in a manner certainly agreeable to himself, perhaps advantageous to his family. This plan had been overthrown ; and we must now leave him for the present to endure his disappointment.

CHAPTER II.

“Baden, June 25.

“My dear Sophy.

“We are to leave this place so soon, that you will have no other letter from me bearing a foreign post-mark. We have made excursions in various directions from our head-quarters here, which have been most of them pleasant, but which will hardly bear description, particularly as you know the

places so well. I have enjoyed my tour very much, and have found Mrs. Fitzgerald an extremely agreeable travelling companion, her tastes and fancies being seldom violently opposed to mine.

“People told us we could never get on without a gentleman; but I cannot see that we have felt the want of one; and to speak truth, unless you would have let us engage Philip for the occasion, I should have thought the perpetual escort of one of the ‘more worthy gender’ rather a plague than otherwise. We have an excellent courier, who spares us all unnecessary trouble, and I am now glad I yielded to Mrs. Fitzgerald’s entreaty to cross the sea with her, much as I doubted at first whether it would turn out pleasantly.

“Before we came to Baden, we were for two or three days at ——, where, as we walked out one afternoon, I met face to face with—whom do you think? People I thought were at Lausanne. Mr. and Lady Emily Darrell. The gentleman was considerably startled, and looked terribly ashamed either of himself or of his wife, who is much what has been described to you; but it is easy to see that she *has* possessed more beauty than Philip would ever allow. He seemed barely able to return my bow, and I saw him no more, though I had a glimpse of the lady next day.

“There was a time when such a meeting would have startled me also—would have thoroughly upset me indeed; but, I

thank Heaven, it is otherwise now; and I slept not an atom the worse for the encounter.

“I made an acquaintance at the same little Brunnen, that very evening too, which has amused me not a little; being with no more or less respectable a person than that Horace Ferrers, of whom Philip has told you ‘that he was the plague of poor Darrell’s life.’ He is the youngest of that precious brotherhood, and for cool impudence and easy style of making himself at home anywhere, I should say he far surpassed that Alfred Ferrers, about whom Aunt Clayton frightened herself so much on my account years ago.

“I never saw this one’s match, unless it were a certain Ralph Harrington, who pro-

posed to me the third time we met, as you may remember. Yet he is not actually offensive; and the way in which he appears to fancy he has known you all his life, and the sort of innocence with which he takes it for granted that you are charmed with his company, entertain me so much that I cannot think it worth while to be angry.

“He is rather good-looking; evidently thinks himself extremely so; and is said to ‘live by his wits,’ which I suppose are very productive, judging by his dress and his horses. He came here a few days after our arrival, having introduced himself in the *Kursaal* at the other place in a singularly off-hand manner; and when he is not occupied ‘professionally’ as one may call it,

that is, playing and betting at the gaming-tables, he dedicates himself to Mrs. Fitzgerald and me, and we are duly sensible of the honour done us in having the benefit of his spare minutes. He does not seem to have an idea that there is anything to be ashamed of in his way of life, and is altogether a curious specimen; the more so, as he never attempts to gloss over what I must conclude he looks on as the natural and necessary habits of a man of his birth and position.

“Mr. Dalrymple told me ‘that Horace Ferrers is not supposed to cheat at cards—at least, he has never yet been found out in so doing—but that he had been forced to sell out of the —th Hussars; and that since then he had gone on at such

a pace as to be obliged to quit England in a very great hurry about a year and a half ago,' from which time my informant professes not to understand how he has managed.

"Yet Mr. Dalrymple pronounces him to be a 'less unmitigated blackguard' than his brother Alfred, who has done everything he could do without being transported, between sixteen and two-and-thirty, but is still in England, and to be seen on every race-course, existing no one knows how, except it be by swindling, and making that unfortunate being who had the insanity to marry him, the pretty Miss Villiers we have so often seen, as miserable as might be expected.

"The eldest brother of the set, Lord

Northleigh, has, it seems, patched up his fortunes by espousing a somewhat disreputable person, who became a widow at a very convenient moment for him, and has a pretty good jointure. They are not visited where they live in Norfolk, but the rest of the family evidently think him a 'respectable man,' inasmuch as he has now a settled income, and is not obliged to live from one shift and expedient to another, as all the rest do.

"I think you will agree with me that one seldom hears of such a tribe in any rank, and I can fancy that 'poor Darrell,' as he is denominated by all the men who recollect him, has had plenty of inconvenience and trouble through his connection with them. As to his union with Lady Emily, for being

thrown away on whom some people waste their pity on him, I have long been convinced they may spare their feelings. A woman of any dignity of character and purity of mind would be lost on one who knows so little how to value those qualities.

“I never heard that he had had any actual predecessor in Lady Emily’s favours ; so that, as he is of an easy temper and disposition, there is no reason (unless he has more pride of character than I imagine) why he should not be contented with his lot ; grievous as it would be to one who possessed any real elevation of mind. I once had a vague notion of some wayward destiny that had violently overruled his actions ; but now (I know Philip does not

trouble himself to read letters not directed to him) I simply think that Arthur Darrell's elopement and subsequent marriage, were only a practical illustration of the vulgar proverb: 'Birds of a feather flock together.'

"I do not know if it will be news to you, but it was somewhat a surprize to me to learn, as I did from Mary Thornton on my arrival here, that my uncle had asked this same nephew of his to spend a month at Darrell Place, whence I conclude he must be there at this very moment. I wonder how the visit will pass; and what sort of impression he will make after so long an estrangement!

"I hope to be with you at Moor End by the first week in July, and I hope too,

that you will succeed in your plan of going to the sea-side instead of to the Continent this year as you would prefer it so much. On leaving you I am to pay all the northern visits I missed last summer, and am to spend some time too at Scarborough with Mrs. Oakley and the Seatons, so that Cranfield will be empty the whole summer—great part of the autumn indeed. I have felt so much more free to leave it when I like, and as long as I like, since Mary Thornton has been established at Uncle Darrell's.

“It appears to me that that arrangement works well hitherto in all respects; for if it is an unspeakable comfort to my uncle on the one hand, and a satisfaction to all the family, the circumstances

in which she has found herself since her husband's death have made her feel thankful to have such a home for herself and her children. She is really mistress of the house, which you know she was not at her father-in-law's, and though, of course, she has to consider certain ways and particularities of my uncle's, she has the sense to weigh the advantages of the situation against its trifling annoyances, and to make up her mind to them easily. It must indeed be confessed, though she is far from brilliant, that she has few equals for right-mindedness and good temper.

“ June 26.

“ Your letter has just come in time for me to acknowledge it, which I am glad of ;

but I am sorry you are to cross the water after all, as you are so tired of continental trips. Philip has such a craze for going to the farthest place he can think of, that I believe you are lucky in getting him to fix on Spa as a compromise, though I confess, I doubt your being allowed to abide there in peace. On this occasion I trace a little more motive for his change of plans than the mere love of perpetual motion. When my uncle asked his nephew Arthur to spend a month with him, Philip thought he should see his friend in England, and was content to stay there too.

“When Arthur Darrell declined the invitation (as you tell me he has had the inexpressible folly to do), Philip thought he could

not miss his visit to the continent, which annually gives him facility for flying off from the place where he settles you and the children to pass his week or ten days with his old school-fellow. It rather consoles me when I look back with shame, and almost with wonder to the days when I lived as it were under a spell, to see that my past folly is kept in countenance by the still abiding infatuation of so sensible a man as Philip; but then I think there is something besides infatuation in it—a sort of point of honour of sticking to his friend through good report and bad report, for which I respect Philip, let the object of his constant friendship be what he may. At all events I am sorry for you; but I shall condole with you more at large when I come. Mrs. Fitzgerald begs to be

kindly remembered to you, and I am ever,
my dear Sophy,

“Your affectionate cousin,

“ALICE WENTWORTH.”

One morning towards the middle of August, about six weeks after the date of the above, Arthur Darrell and his wife, now returned to their abode at Lausanne, sat each reading a letter which that day's post had brought.

“Whom have you heard from, Arthur?” asked Lady Emily, laying down her own letter; “but I see it is Mr. Bramstone's writing; what does he tell you?”

“He tells me,” answered Darrell, “that he and his party are just setting off for Spa,

whence he thinks they will go southward after passing a fortnight there ; and he expects in September or October to be able to come on and see us for a few days."

"I shall be very glad to see him," said Lady Emily, rather stiffly ; and then added, after a pause : "How fortunate the Bramstones are to be able to go about as they do, without considering expense or anything."

"I do not think they by any means live without consideration of expense," said Darrell. "They are not ill-off ; but you know Bramstone is not a 'millionaire.'"

"No, I know that ; but I was comparing them with ourselves," sighed Lady Emily. "Do you know what they have ?" continued she.

“No, not exactly, for I think it has been added to, since they first married ; and I do not know precisely how much she had.”

“Ah, yes ! she had a good fortune I believe ; that is in itself such a great thing,” said Lady Emily, in a yet more melancholy tone ; “I am sure if we had half as much we should be very comfortable ; but I wonder you cannot tell what their income is !”

Lady Emily was much given to similar “wonderings ;” accompanied by a never failing chapter of lamentations ; and it was, perhaps, not very surprizing that her husband answered in a somewhat irritated tone.

“No, I cannot tell you ; and there

is nothing I hate so much as calculating what every one has or has not, for no purpose but making comparisons, and getting more dissatisfied with what one has one's self."

"Well," said she, mournfully, "you always think it wrong and discontented to say a word about the inconvenience of having so little money ; or to wish one's self as rich as many people ; and may be it is so with regard to dress and carriages, and things of that kind. But you cannot blame me for wishing we were richer, when you have yourself confessed it would be a means, a help—to our—to our children's being replaced in the position we were born to."

"No, Emily," answered he, with a gentler

tone and manner ; “ I cannot blame you for wishing it on that score—as I share the feeling completely—only too completely ; but when you find it so hard to live in poverty, and are naturally desirous that your children should not, as they grow up, be forced to choose between solitude and unsuitable society, I cannot help wondering at your having objected to the only rational step I could take which might tend to free you one day from the inconvenience and anxiety you suffer.”

“ What do you mean, Arthur ? Oh ! is it about the visit to your uncle ? I am sure if I had thought it would lead to any good—but you were not sure of that.”

“ No ; who can be sure ? but to refuse was to throw away the chance. Bramstone

thinks I was quite wrong to decline—he regrets it exceedingly.”

“Does he? I am so sorry! I wish you had explained it more in this way at the time, for I should not have minded being left, if I had known exactly how you looked on the visit.”

“I told you at the time; that is past praying for.”

“But,” insisted she, “could you not change your mind? Did not you tell me your uncle asked you for any time between the middle of June and the end of August?”

“Yes, but it does not signify now.”

“Then did you absolutely refuse?”

“I said I could not so arrange my plans as to enable me to visit England at present.”

“ Oh ! nothing more precise than that ? and your uncle has written since, has he not ? ”

“ Yes, he has—merely a few lines—more to show he had not taken my refusal ill, than for any other end.”

“ But what was in them ? ”

“ I can hardly tell you now ; stay ! I think it is in my pocket still—yes, here it is. He says he is ‘ Sorry I could not make it convenient just now. ’ ‘ Does not give up the hope that I may yet find it possible between this time and September. ’ ‘ Should I change my mind—to let him know. ’ ‘ Kind remembrances from Mary Thornton. ’ That’s the whole of it.”

“ Then you are free to go after all ! ” exclaimed she.

"Yes, if I had answered it directly; but it is now nearly a month since it was written—and I could not well—besides it would not suit me now—for many reasons. If I could have gone in June, it would have been different."

"How provoking of you not to choose to go now, because I did not quite like your going then!"

"That is not my reason," said he; "for one thing, if I had gone then, I should have paid Bramstone a visit at his own place, where I have never been; and *now* I should by going to England just miss seeing him over here. It would not do—another year, perhaps. I do not wish to go now."

"Well, I must say," replied Lady Emily,

"if it is not very provoking, it is very stupid of you to stay, when you think it might be of advantage to go; and it really is in your power—and you are always wishing you could but have another glimpse of England. You have not half Horace's spirit. *He* is going to England the day after to-morrow, he tells me."

"Horace going to England!" cried Darrell, in amazement; "what is he thinking of? has he any particular wish to get into the King's Bench? What on earth is taking him?"

"Oh! he expects to be able to manage; I do not suppose he will show himself in London, where he has no wish to go; and as to what takes him—I fancy," proceeded she, with a simper, "that he

has gone on what you call a wild goose chase."

"You don't mean in good earnest, that he is going to England to make himself agreeable to Alice Wentworth?"

"Yes, I do, though he does not exactly say so. I cannot think why he should not. It would be the salvation of him. I never knew him set about anything so sensible. He was constantly with her at Baden, he says; and you know he is very handsome, and can make himself most agreeable."

Darrell laughed contemptuously as she concluded her speech, and said after a pause:

"He is very killing, no doubt, but if he sets his chance of marrying the heiress against that of his being laid hold of, I

think I can calculate where he will be before long."

"Of course there are always chances, as you say yourself," replied the lady; "but I know that people no better than Horace in any way, marry heiresses for ever."

"So they do, and so might he, if he set about it in some quarters. But Alice Wentworth! the presumption is almost beyond belief!"

As he spoke, his face flushed, and his lip curled so scornfully, that his wife inquired, "what he knew of Miss Wentworth to make him so certain of her refusing Horace?"

"I know enough of her," answered he, "to feel sure he has no chance."

"I dare say he would have had none

formerly," replied Lady Emily, "but now she has missed the grand connections she wished to form, and is past eight-and-twenty, I should think it not unlikely—I should not wonder—"

"If she were glad of Horace for want of a better?" interrupted her husband. "Well, there is no knowing," added he, "strange things do happen. Yet I should be surprized nevertheless. But tell me," he continued, ironically, "has she asked him to her house? or, is he to stay at my uncle's perhaps while he is in England? or, how is it? for his being in the same country with her will not in itself advance matters much."

"What nonsense you talk, Arthur! how could she invite him? but he reckons on seeing a good deal of her in this way: she

is to spend all the remainder of this summer, and some of the autumn in Yorkshire, partly at Scarborough, and partly on visits to people who do not live far from that Jack Merton he is always talking of. He has waited till about the time she was to go north, which is just now. He means to go to Scarborough in the first instance, and then he will arrange his plans according to circumstances."

"And very clever plans they are!" cried Darrell, "only please to let him know, that if he gets locked up, I cannot and will not do anything towards setting him loose. No one can say Horace shrinks from a bold venture. But she is decidedly going north, is she?"

"Yes, you can see the letter, if you

like," said Lady Emily, giving it to him.

He looked it over ; smiling at some of the contents, apparently irritated by others ; but returned it without making any observation, and without noticing various remarks made by his wife to the effect "that Miss Wentworth might do worse." "Horace would make a very good husband after all." "She did not see why it should not be," &c., &c.

Darrell rose and walked up and down the room several times, then stopped and said to his wife :

"After all, I believe my scruples were unfounded. My uncle's last letter shows that it would be no inconvenience to receive me any time this summer. So I may as well

go. I shall write to announce myself, making all proper apologies for having chosen my own time, and giving him the power of putting me off if he likes, by return of post. I suppose Charly can be ready by the time I go ?”

“Oh yes, he can, of course ; but are you determined to take him ?”

“I should like it,” answered Darrell, “for as the opportunity is given him, he may as well see his own country, and be seen by his relations. My cousin, Mrs. Thornton, who now lives at Darrell Place, and has kept house for my uncle since his eldest son’s widow married again, has children much about his age, as well as older ones. He will be extremely well off there, for Mary Thornton is the kindest creature on earth,

and exceedingly fond of children. There will be no difficulty at all about him. So, if you do not very much mind it, I think you would do well to endeavour to spare him."

"I will endeavour," said Lady Emily, "I will, if you think it right. It will make the six weeks additionally dull. Yet, if it is to be for his good—but, Arthur, a plan has come into my head. Suppose you were to take us all to England for the autumn. I do not mean on with you, of course, but to England; and we could stay at Brighton while you went to your uncle's. I am sure that air would do me more good than anything, and to little Julia besides; my sister Harriet is to be there too;—why should not we?"

“Because” answered Darrell, whose face had become more and more gloomy at every phrase of his wife’s proposition, “because, if you do not, I feel that such an arrangement would make my going alone to Darrell Place more disagreeable than it is; and, moreover, if you wanted to take a journey to England with bag and baggage, you should not have insisted on going to that German place, though we could not get rid of our house here, and all the rest of it. Such things are not to be done for nothing, as you might know by this time; and as to Lady Wilmington’s being an attraction for you, I have never chosen to do the odious thing of forbidding you to see your sister, though I do not think you have any violent affection for each other, but I may as well remind you

against such time as it may be in our power to live in our own country, that she belongs (no one knows it better than you) to that class of people who, as you have yourself said more than once, are far more worthy of being shunned, than many who are banished society. Your going is totally out of the question."

Lady Emily was by this time weeping; 'Not," she said, "for the overthrow of her castle, she was used to that; but on account of the way in which she was reproached for a little want of reflection, and for her relations."

The fact was that at the mention of Brighton a vision had risen before Darrell of his wife going about there with Lady Wilmington, making herself remarkable, ridi-

culous, running into debt, perhaps, as had been the case more than once before they left England, when temporarily freed from his control; and it had provoked him into giving the harsh answer for which he now blamed himself and asked pardon.

"I wished," he said, "to prevent your building even for a moment on a scheme in which I knew I could not gratify you. I spoke in a hurry, and in a way I did not mean, and am sorry for."

"I believe you are," replied she, drying her tears, "I do not think you wish to make me utterly miserable. I am quite resigned to give up my plan, resigned to be left for I dare say much longer than the six weeks; and to lose even Charly for all that time."

"If you are merely resigned," said her husband, "neither Charly nor I need go ; but just now you not only thought it right—you showed a strong wish I should avail myself of my uncle's invitation."

"So I did, and so I do," answered she. "I wish you to go, and Charly too, since you would like your relations to see him, poor child. Do not quarrel with me for the word 'resigned;' I did not mean it in any sense that need—at least the sense in which I felt it was so different. I dare say you do not understand ; but I am quite willing to make the sacrifice—quite—to be sure, it is not the first I have made to you." And so saying, she rose and left the room as if unable to endure the continuance of such a conversation.

“Sacrifice!” said her husband to himself as she disappeared, “she tempts me sorely at times. But she has given in—no matter how—it is vain to wait for a more gracious assent; I believe she is really convinced, though she will make such a favour of it. So I shall see England again! see the old place again. It will be heart break as well as pleasure—but I could not now give up the thoughts of it for anything—I shall see England, yet not see *her*. I shall only see the roofs and the trees of Cranfield. That is all right. Then I shall be back before Bramstone’s return home; so without asking any one’s leave I shall take him wherever he may be, in my way to my own household gods, which I shall then have to transport to Nice, unless Emily changes her mind,

after having persuaded herself that she cannot live through next winter anywhere else. I would rather for some reasons pay that visit than receive it—though believe his wife hates me—and I don't wonder."

CHAPTER III.

MISS WENTWORTH TO MRS. BRAMSTONE.

"Darrell Place, August 18.

"MY dear Sophy,

"You will be surprized at the date of this letter, considering that I ought, according to the plans fixed when we were together, to be either with the Oakleys, or the Ingrams, far away in Yorkshire. But

all that arrangement has been completely overturned, and here I am at my uncle's. Just as I was settling everything at Cranfield—what was to be done and not done, during the long absence I calculated on—how much of the alteration I talked to you and Philip about I could trust to have made while I was away, and a great deal besides—I heard from Mary Thornton that she would be glad to have a talk with me about *her* plans. I rode over here and found that she was asked with her children to spend a month at her father-in-law's; but she scrupled to leave my uncle; and I saw that she was fully determined to give up the visit, and run the risk of offending old Thornton, much as she wished to avoid the possibility of it, sooner than quit this

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house without leaving some one in her stead whom my uncle liked, and whom she looked on as really fit to supply her place.

“You will easily perceive to what all this led. There is no one of his connections whom my uncle thoroughly likes, who could be called on in so sudden a manner to spend six weeks—perhaps more—with him, except myself. I was inwardly a good deal vexed, because this will be the second time of my refusing these Yorkshire visits, and I did expect a good deal of pleasure in staying with the Seatons. But I saw it was the only way to put poor Mary’s mind at rest, and I could do no less than offer to take her place here for as long as she likes, considering that I only sacrifice a little

amusement by staying ; while her children's interest may be concerned in her accepting or declining their grandfather's invitation. It follows that I have entirely put an end to all my engagements ; for, though, I may be free before the end of September, I cannot feel sure of it ; and it is not fair to tie other people by merely conditional promises.

“ I came here on Thursday ; Mary Thornton went away on Friday morning ; and since that time I have literally not seen a creature but my uncle ; nor am I likely to see many more during my stay ; particularly as the Thorntons' absence has been thought to afford a good opportunity for doing all kinds of things (not painting, do not be frightened !) to their suite of rooms, and in

fact to the whole west side of the house ; so that there is positively no means of giving a visitor a bed here at present, except 'he, she or it' were sent up into what they call the turret-room at the east end. I do not suppose this state of carpentering and confusion can last very long ; but you know my uncle is not now fond of seeing any one besides his relations, and the neighbours he has had to his house all his life.

"I comfort myself for the slight disappointment I have had by reflecting that I can ride or drive over to Cranfield every day I choose, and there see that nothing remarkably stupid is being done either to the house or to the garden.

"My uncle is extremely well—out of

doors almost all day—and if he continues so I shall have no attendance on him of the sort that I could possibly think wearying. I am only ashamed of the kind of thankfulness he expresses to me for the small sacrifice I am making. I will not finish this to-day, though I have little expectation of having any more exciting events to chronicle to-morrow ; but you told me you were not sure of being in any settled place before the 25th ; so that if this reaches —— by that day, it will be the soonest that you can get it. I was afraid you would never be allowed to sit quietly down at Spa ; but I trust that as —— is a new place, it will be thought worth staying in long enough to give you a good rest.”

The following morning Mr. Darrell was so busy all breakfast time talking to his fac-totum, Price, about some trees that were to be cut down, that he never even put on his spectacles to look at the letters which lay on the table beside him. The dialogue with Price not being over even when breakfast was finished, his niece went into the little drawing-room to begin the copy of a picture she had undertaken for Mrs. Bramstone ; and, while she was so employed, her uncle came in with an open letter in his hand, looking a good deal disturbed.

“ Alice,” said he, “ I am very much puzzled what to do ; and yet I may say I have no choice. You know I asked Arthur here in June, and he declined coming.

I gave him any time between June and September, but he did not say, 'I can come in July,' or 'I can come in August,' only that 'he could not manage it at present.' I wrote him a line afterwards, merely saying I was sorry, and that I had not lost all hope of seeing him, just that he might have the option of changing his mind, if he pleased. But as I heard no more from him, I concluded that it really did not suit him, or that he was not 'allowed' to come, and gave up all idea of it. Now, this morning comes a letter, which by the way ought from its date to have been here long ago, in which he writes, 'that as I had been so kind as to say in my last that I still looked forward to seeing him, he proposed to set off for England with his eldest boy that day week, un-

less he by that time got a letter putting him off. If he did not hear at all, he would suppose his visit was still seasonable, and I might expect his arrival here by the evening of the 20th, which is to-morrow! Now, did you ever see anything so unlucky? I cannot put him off now. He is on the road—perhaps crossing the sea at this moment. Very inconsiderate of him to drive things so close; but he was always careless—terribly so. What on earth should have prevented his coming in June, when it would have suited me perfectly, or even in July? *Then* there was Mary here, and the house was not full of work-people. I positively do not know how they can be put up!”

“I cannot think there will be any diffi-

culty, uncle," replied Alice, calmly ; "everything can be arranged, I am sure. Your nephew can be in the turret-room, and the little boy—"

"Ah, that is the inconvenience," interrupted Mr. Darrell. "I asked the child, because I thought it would be taken kindly, and because he may as well see England now, if he is ever to live in it ; but it was with the idea that he would be with Mary's maids and governesses, and no particular trouble to any one ; but now—"

"He will be no trouble, I assure you, uncle," said his niece ; "he can sleep in the little room opening out of mine, where I keep my canaries. He will be within call of Brown, and of Sarah too ; and will not be the least in the way, if that is what you

are thinking of. Then, for amusing him, there is the white pony, and all sorts of things that he must find novelties; and Brown dotes on children, and will think it a perfect treat to dress and look after him."

"It is very kind of you, Alice, to settle all that—very kind," replied Mr. Darrell, gradually recovering from the perturbed state into which the sudden announcement of his nephew's approach had thrown him; but he could not immediately shake off the whole train of feelings it had aroused, and he kept walking up and down the room, giving vent to them from time to time pretty much in the following manner: "Very inconsiderate of Arthur. He is welcome, notwithstanding; for, in spite of many things, I should

be sorry, very sorry to lose sight of him entirely. I wish he had been as like his poor father in essentials as in face and manner; but that cannot be helped; it is the worse for him, I take it. It would have suited me and every one so thoroughly, if he had come when I asked him. Why should not he? There could have been no more real impediment then than now. I would wager anything that woman has been at the bottom of it; but if so, I am glad he has plucked up spirit at last, though he comes at such an inconvenient moment.

“Your poor aunt,” continued he, addressing himself more directly to Alice, “was inclined to hope I might receive her, when they were once married; but I said that a divorced

woman, should not come within these doors in my day, and I say the same now ; the more so, as I did not give in in his mother's lifetime. When I am gone," he proceeded, after a pause, "it will be different. I do not grudge her what countenance she can get from the rest of the family ; and she will get countenance, I dare say, when their circumstances are changed. It will be the better for the children ; but I will not see her."

"I am told," he began again, and stopped in his walk ; "that is, I hear through your friend Bramstone, and others besides, that Arthur has shown very right feeling, great firmness in many respects ; for with the income they have, and the habits she *had*, not to speak of himself—it must have re-

quired a great deal of both those qualities to keep within it. It is more, I confess, than I should at one time have expected from him. And he has never broken the promise he made his mother, rather to live in utter seclusion, than enter into that sort of society, which makes a kind of border-ground between good and bad; and which many, situated like him, are tempted to put up with.

No. He refused to stay at the Wilmingtons too, while he was in England: he was quite right. I wish he were as well quit of the Ferrers men abroad as he is of the sisters. I do believe he has honestly endeavoured to make the best of his bargain, poor fellow! But it is a sad business, and I cannot bear to think of it; the less so,

as I am sure there is good in him. I have only seen him once since his marriage, and that was at his mother's funeral. I shall never forget his face that day! I believe I should have done anything he had asked me just then; but he was not thinking of asking. Well, I am glad I am to see him again."

After having delivered himself of all these reflections, Mr. Darrell was about to leave the room; but he turned once more to his niece, and an uneasy look came over his face again as he said:

"You and Arthur have met, I think, since—since the time—" he stopped and hesitated for a moment—"I mean that I think I heard you met Arthur several times in London just before that cursed

elopement took place. Was it not so ?”

Alice replied that it was true they had met—met frequently indeed.

“Ay, so I thought,” said he; and as he went out at the door, he added, half to himself, half aloud: “That is all right then.”

Alice sat a while without moving; and then, laying aside her drawing, set about the continuation of her letter to her cousin, which ran as follows :

“August 19.

“I said I expected no events to chronicle; but in my life I was never more mistaken, as you will judge when I tell you I have just learnt that Arthur Darrell and one of

his children are to arrive here to-morrow!! I confess this intelligence took my breath away when I first heard it. My uncle was considerably put out by the sudden way in which the news has come upon him; but there is no help for it; and now I should say he looks forward to seeing 'poor Arthur,' as he calls him, with more satisfaction. I am even led to suspect by expressions he has let fall, that he means to make him his heir, notwithstanding the displeasure he has given; and that his asking him to bring his son is in some way connected with the intention. However that may be, I have no doubt of a very great softening of his feelings towards the nephew, concerning whom I have heard him speak more severely than I, with all my contempt

for his conduct and character, could ever think just. Of course from the vicinity of Cranfield to this place, the man must be aware that he will be exposed to the possibility of meeting me; but to find me here established in the house, is a thing he never can have contemplated, and one which, in spite of his sins I would gladly spare him. I wish I could at least let him know what he has to expect.

“I have myself even made a virtue of necessity, and have engaged that Brown should look after the little boy—there is literally no one else to do it. If the child were to prove as good and tractable as your Willy, she would find it an amusement; but I fear that is not very likely. I shall keep this till after ‘the arrival,’ for I am

sure you would rather wait a day or two longer to hear some account of it."

"August 21.

"Well, here they are! It was calculated that they would probably arrive by an afternoon train yesterday, and the britschka was sent to the station to meet them; but it did not return at the expected hour. Dinner time came, my uncle grew fidgetty and impatient. I dressed—returned to the drawing-room—no one was yet come—and I was beginning to share my uncle's wonder as to whether 'anything had happened to the train,' when wheels were heard in the approach, and my uncle went out to receive them, while I remained in the drawing-room, trusting that he would

make his guest aware of my being an inmate of the house before we met face to face. He had evidently done so, and was explaining the cause of Mary Thornton's absence when they entered the room; so that his nephew did not look surprized to encounter me. I was completely self-possessed. by that time, welcomed him to England, offered him my hand, and endeavoured, though in vain, to make acquaintance with the child, a pretty little fellow, with long curling hair, about your Willy's size and age.

“‘I hope your boy can speak English, Arthur?’ asked my uncle.

“‘He would be puzzled to speak anything else for two minutes,’ was the answer, given, I thought, with a rather vexed look. ‘Don’t

be silly, Charly,' he continued; 'go and speak to your uncle.'

"But Charly did not stir, or move his face from his father's shoulder, till the latter rose to go to his room. Before he went, however, he turned round, and addressing me for the first time, said, rather pointedly, 'that he had heard I was spending the summer in Yorkshire.' I wonder whence he had gleaned that piece of information?

"I thought myself very fortunate in being able to induce the child to stay with me in the drawing-room, by the help of showing him pictures, stuffed birds, &c.; and he began to steal looks at me, though he maintained the most obstinate silence. However, when tea, bread and butter,

and cake appeared, he showed that he could open his mouth for one purpose, if not for another ; and on his father's return, as he was finishing his meal, he actually found his tongue, and exclaimed, so as to leave no doubt as to his knowledge of English :

“ ‘ Such a nice supper, papa ! and I have got tea ! ’

“ The business then was to consign him to Brown quietly. I promised him the sight of three canaries and a bull-finch, if he would go up with her like a good boy ; and while I was exerting my eloquence, and presenting him with sugar-plums, I heard my uncle explaining to his nephew how and why the west side of the house was dismantled, and for the present useless,

as also that it had been arranged Charly should sleep in the little room adjoining mine.

“ ‘Charly and I have arrived at a very inconvenient time, I fear,’ said Arthur Darrell, just as his son was peacefully disappearing. ‘You ought to have put us off.’

“ ‘Not for the world,’ replied my uncle, and then let out quite unintentionally that the announcement of the visit had only arrived the day before. His nephew looked terribly annoyed, and said something about his own stupidity, which was luckily cut short by the intelligence that dinner was ready; and as we seated ourselves at table, my uncle declared ‘that their coming had disturbed nothing but my canaries; and

that he hoped he would not vex himself about such nonsense.'

"He *was* vexed though, and it was some time before he got into anything like conversation. When he did, he and my uncle talked of England and the Continent as compared to each other ; of the price of this, that and the other, here and there ; of the advantages and disadvantages of residing abroad ; of the number and convenience of railroads ; very nearly as I have heard Mr. Childers of the Grove discuss the same subjects. I could hardly believe it was Arthur Darrell speaking ; it contrasted so strangely with old recollections. I think him still very handsome ; though it is true, as my uncle observed to me to-day, that he is much altered. The alteration is in countenance,

and is greater even than I had been led to expect from what you had told me. I can hardly judge yet whether this gloom is habitual; but I have hitherto seen little variation in it. To be sure, things have fallen out very unpleasantly for him; and I think he is overpowered with shame in my presence, which is painful to me; for little as I am disposed to pity a man who has worked so deliberately to put himself into a humiliating and mortifying situation, it hurts me to think that a companion of my childhood, a friend of my brothers, should now breathe more freely when I leave the room.

“ You may believe I made the evening as short as I could. I found little Charly had allowed himself to be undressed and put to bed very submissively; he was sleeping like a

dormouse and when he woke in the morning after a more than twelve hours' rest, he was cured of his shyness, put up his mouth to kiss me, and was so entirely freed from the dumb spirit which had possessed him on his arrival, that the difficulty was to restrain his endless questions and exclamations during the necessary operations of his toilette ; in the course of which, Brown tried his patience by the pains she took to get his curls out of the 'terrible tangle' in which they were.

"As he had slept late, I took him down with me to share the breakfast I dispensed to the three generations of Darrells. He flew to his father, and gave him much useful information concerning the nice little bed he had been in, the pony he had seen from

the window, &c. He was answered 'that he seemed to have been better off than he had ever been before,' and was then desired 'to go and speak to his uncle.'

"'He is not like Uncle Horace,' observed Charly, slowly and gravely, as he looked attentively at poor dear Uncle Darrell.

"I could not refrain from smiling. My uncle, who had not heard Charly's words, asked the cause of my mirth; and on learning it, he laughed heartily, but said to the boy :

"'Charly, there are old uncles, as well as young uncles. Come here to me, and you shall have some egg.'

"It was quite unnecessary to repeat this invitation; and the young gentleman was

presently on as good terms with his great-uncle as with me. But his father coloured, and seemed vexed at the entertainment the child's speech had afforded.

"After breakfast I inquired a little into Master Charly's literary attainments, and found that he can read very fairly, having been taught that first element of learning by his nurse, who is English, and has been pains-taking enough to instruct her charge. He also informed me that he had begun the multiplication table under the same instructress. 'I quite know the twos,' said he, 'and I can say my prayers.'

"This combination of the 'twos' with his devotions disturbed my gravity even more than the notable fact of my uncle's dissimilarity to Horace Ferrers. Luckily for me,

Charly darted out of the open window at that very moment to look at a butterfly on the lawn, and I was at liberty to indulge in a laugh, which was heard by my uncle and his nephew, who were nearer than I thought; and I had to repeat to them the poor child's concatenation of ideas. My uncle was amused; but I noticed that Arthur Darrell did not even smile, though there was nothing in this piece of nonsense which could, like the allusion to Horace Ferrers, excite a disagreeable feeling. I have since been alone with my uncle for a short time, and heard much lamentation over 'poor Arthur.'

"'The child is a nice child,' added he; but he is a foreign, girlish-looking thing, with those ringlets of his. I wish he could be brought up in England. But one thing

I am glad of: Arthur himself is as English as ever; hates living abroad, though he makes up his mind to it; and he likes everything in this country, which is not always the case with travelled gentry. It shows he is right at the core.'

"It is most true that his nephew thoroughly appreciates everything here, from the piece of beef on the table to the trees in the park; and I can see that his 'grievance' (everybody has their 'grievance') is that of living out of England, though he is perfectly aware he could not live comfortably in it. He may have a more incurable one; but really there are so many causes for his feeling both melancholy and awkward on first arriving here, that I cannot attribute this so entirely to the cir-

cumstances of his marriage as my uncle does.

“The little boy, as far as I can perceive, is pleasing, and good-tempered ; more caressing in manner than boys usually are, and no farther spoilt than that one sees he rather expects to be entertained and noticed. He is out with Brown just now ; and in the afternoon I shall take him in the carriage with me to Cranfield, where there are rabbits—white, black, and brown—to amuse him, not to speak of your Willy’s friends, the guinea-pigs ; and the day will be very well got over. But I do wish his father, whom I see now standing in the garden beside my uncle, would or could clear his brow a little ! for then one might temporarily forget certain things which it is always painful to remem-

ber, however little one may regret their termination.

“ I do all I can to set him at ease, but I suppose that is impossible ; and it almost appears to me as if he were the more cast down, the more courtesy I endeavour to show him. I cannot be surprized at this. It would not be very ^{*}wonderful if, after all that has passed, he should downright hate me ; and I would fain be anywhere else. But here I must abide till Mary Thornton’s return ; so that for my own sake I am tempted to wish, that since Arthur Darrell’s feelings and conscience have never influenced his actions, he were as totally unincumbered by them as his brothers-in-law ; our intercourse would then be a great deal more pleasant. This most disagreeable meeting is

entirely owing to the contemptible weakness and vacillation which the man has shown through life. Had he known his own mind, and accepted my uncle's invitation at once—or even named a time for coming, instead of leaving one to suppose he would never come at all, his visit might have been more agreeable to himself; as it is, I can only trust he will get used to me, or it will be weary work. Now I must have done. What a crossed and re-crossed epistle! Well if you can read it—

“ Ever your affectionate cousin,

“ ALICE WENTWORTH.

“ P.S.—Afternoon.—There is just room for me to tell you that I have this day saved poor little Charly Darrell's fair curls from the fatal

shears. As I returned from the gardener's cottage at luncheon time, I met Brown, who came up to me with a very concerned face, saying:

“ ‘Do you know, Ma'am, that Mr. Darrell and the young gentleman's papa have just agreed that his hair is to be cut off! Isn't it a pity? for he won't be nothing like so pretty! and they have desired that Mr. Cox should come up from the village at two o'clock to cut every curl off. Don't you think it a pity, Ma'am? I am sure I should not mind the trouble of brushing and doing it, if it was twice as much, when it turns out so beautiful out of one's hand.’

“I thought Brown might as well be gratified, and poor Charly's beauty spared

for a while ; so I even presented her petition to the men, and after some grumbling on my uncle's part, and an appearance of thorough indifference on his nephew's, I got them to countermand the summons for Mr. Cox. It is lucky Philip was not here. He would certainly have thrown his weight into the scale against me."

CHAPTER IV.

Ach ! ich sah sie Herzen
 Wohl ein Kindelein ;
 Davon ward mein
 Muth Lieb's ermahnt ;

* * * * *

Ich nahm wahr als das Kind erst kam von Ihr,
 Ich nahm's zu mir.

* * * * *

Ich umfing's da wo Sie's erst schön umfing ;
 Und küsst' es an der Stelle wo
 Es von ihr erst geküset was ;
 Was mir doch bas
 Zu Herzen ging.

MINNE-LIED VON JOHANN HADLOUB.

ARTHUR DARRELL *did* get accustomed

to Miss Wentworth's presence ; that is, the gnawing sense of shame by which he was at first devoured when in her sight, either became blunted or counterbalanced. Not that he addressed himself more frequently to her than was absolutely required, but little by little he felt less impelled to rush out of the house on her appearance, and he would sometimes even linger in the same room with her longer than he was called on by any conventional necessity, especially when she was teaching or playing with Charly, to whom he would, every now and then, say a word or two in her hearing expressive of his deep feeling of her kindness, though none such were ever immediately directed to herself. She had taken the child so completely into her charge,

because, in the absence of Mrs. Thornton's part of the establishment, she had no other choice, unless she had either consigned him entirely to servants, or left him to run after his father; in which case, he would have come in the way of Mr. Darrell, who liked to have a good deal of his nephew's company, but who, though extremely kind on the whole, was not at this time of day very patient of a child's continuous prattle and restlessness.

It was therefore fortunate for her that Charly, having, as Mrs. Brown truly conjectured, "several at home under him," had not been made so much of as to be a very troublesome child; though, as may be supposed, he had his occasional freaks and little fits of naughtiness,

which, however, were not often very lasting.

Not long after the arrival of father and son at Darrell Place, on one of those soft, fragrant mornings when the absence of a strong sun renders the warm richly-scented air more enjoyable, the former sat alone at an open window which looked on the garden, listlessly reading a letter from Lausanne. Suddenly his attention was attracted from without, by Charly's merry laugh, followed by the exclamation of "Oh! it's nice to be up so high!" and a moment after, Miss Wentworth passed by, carrying the little boy in her arms. She stepped as firmly and lightly as if the burden had been no heavier than the flower-basket which hung from her right hand.

Arthur Darrell looked at her with admiration; but withdrew his eyes hastily as she turned her head towards the window; and he called out to the child:

"Are you not ashamed to make yourself such a baby, Charly, and to tire Miss Wentworth so?"

But Charly looked not one whit ashamed; he seemed rather to triumph in his lofty seat, as he answered:

"No, no, papa, she is not tired!" and he clung yet closer round Alice's neck, kissing her cheek, and adding, in a coaxing voice: "you are not tired yet, are you?"

"Not yet," she answered, "but I should soon be, Charly; so come down; and if you are good, you shall have a ride on the pony, presently."

She was obeyed with very laudable docility, aided, perhaps, by the prospect she held out ; and while she took her way to the neighbouring flower-beds, and proceeded to fill her basket from them, the little boy ran in to his father, jumped on his knee, was clasped in his arms, and kissed warmly. " You are a happy little dog, Charly," cried he, as he loosed his hold ; whereupon the child, looking up in his face, inquired smiling, why his papa " called him a little dog ?" " Because you are like a little dog, that is always running about and wagging his tail ; because you trot after Miss Wentworth just as Carlo used after me."

Satisfied with this explanation, Charly was running back into the garden, when he saw Alice appearing from the other end of

the room, loaded with flowers, which she set down on the table, preparatory to replenishing the vases and ornamental glasses on the mantel-piece and elsewhere.

“Miss Wentworth,” cried he, flying up to her, “papa says I am your little dog! am I?—then you have two little dogs, Flo and me!”

“I wish you were not more troublesome than twenty little dogs!” said his father.

“I am going to make him very useful,” said Alice, replying to both, and looking from one to the other, “much more useful than any little dog could be. You know, Charly, that when you are being of use, you cannot be troublesome; so take these dead flowers, and give them to Richard

(he is in the dining-room), and tell him to throw them away; then ask him to bring a large jug full of water, and to give you the little jug, if you will carry it very carefully; I want it for the fresh flowers."

Charly departed proud of his commission; and his father, drawing near to the table, took up flower after flower, watching his hostess's operations as she began selecting those which were to adorn the largest and most conspicuous vase.

"Charly seems never so happy," observed she, "as when he thinks he is doing me some great service."

"If he were not," said Darrell, hastily, "he would be the most ungrateful little brute

that ever—" He stopped short; but added with some appearance of effort, "that he trusted Charly was not of an ungrateful nature."

"I should be much surprized if he were," said Miss Wentworth; "he appears to me most affectionate; and you may at least not disturb yourself with the idea that he gives trouble, for I never saw a child whom it was easier to entertain by furnishing him with employments, which in the country, and in this weather, is never difficult to do."

"You are most kind to say so—to feel so," answered Darrell, without raising his eyes; "but I ought to have brought him here in June if at all."

"For his own sake it is a pity he has not

his cousin's companionship," replied Alice ;
"otherwise, you see yourself how little he is
in the way."

As she spoke, the child re-entered carrying
the full water-jug, with a half-anxious, half-
important look. His father glanced at him,
and said :

"I think he *is* affectionate—sensible to
kindness ; but—I wish for every reason that
I had brought him in June," and having
said these words, he left the room, where
Charly exerted himself greatly—whether to
the help or hindrance of Miss Wentworth's
occupation—till such time as the pony was
ready.

The child was scarcely gone, when Mr.
Darrell appeared, wondering "where Arthur
could be ! He had agreed to go with him to

call on Mr. Childers at half-past eleven, and it was twenty minutes to twelve already !” A servant was dispatched to seek for him ; and Alice had reason to believe that he was found soon after in one of the shady walks of the garden, and there reminded of his engagement—at least, it is certain that the visit to Mr. Childers was paid, as were various others of a similar description, in the course of that day, and the two or three following ones.

It appeared to Arthur Darrell that his uncle showed so marked a wish to make him renew acquaintance with all those neighbours whom he had been used to see in former times, when at Darrell Place, that he became more inclined than he had been to believe the invitation given him was connected with a

definite project of leaving him the family estate; concerning the probability of which, however, he felt at the moment strangely indifferent, considering that the disadvantage of being poor for his station had weighed not a little on him.

In revisiting places and persons so familiar to him in boyhood and youth, he experienced, as he had anticipated, both pleasure and pain; but he gave himself up resignedly to what seemed to please his uncle, rode and drove in this and that direction, and got over day after day without seeing much either of Miss Wentworth or Charly. After the 1st of September, indeed, he never appeared between breakfast and dinner.

In the meanwhile, one or two of the rooms

on the west side had been restored to a habitable state; and as Charly still remained an inmate of Alice's dressing-room (that arrangement being found on the whole too convenient to be altered), it was now possible to offer a bed to a visitor, and the house resumed more of its usual appearance. A dinner-party was therefore planned; and an elderly couple, who resided at rather too great a distance to return at night, were asked to sleep as well as dine at Darrell Place.

In the evening, the lady, who had known Alice from childhood, began to bewail the change of head-dress she had made a few years before; that, namely, of wearing her hair in bands, instead of the long ringlets in which she had always been seen in early

youth. Alice thought the bands more becoming—more suitable—at all events, more convenient; but her old friend said so much on the subject, that she agreed to gratify Mrs. Hillyard's fancy by coming down next morning with the discarded ringlets.

Accordingly, she appeared at breakfast with her head-dress of old times: about which, as compared to her more recent style, the usual degree of contrary opinion was expressed. Mr. Hillyard preferred the bands, Mr. Darrell liked the ringlets, and Mrs. Hillyard confessed "she was not sure—not certain whether the curls were so much becoming than the bands as she had fancied—it was hard to decide; but Alice looked so well in all styles that it was of little impor-

tance." Arthur Darrell said not a word, but looked long and steadfastly at the hair—the head—which the general discussion allowed him to contemplate without restraint.

Charly, meanwhile, who (having breakfasted early) was playing about the room, went up to Miss Wentworth to show her a new stick, and looking in her face, seemed unable to take his eyes off her; and she was on the point of asking him why he stood gazing so earnestly, when he said deliberately: "Why you are just like papa's picture!"

At this observation, which was heard by the whole table, and sounded sufficiently absurd, Mrs. Hillyard turned round to see if Arthur Darrell bore any resemblance to Miss

Wentworth. Alice told the child that he was growing silly, and had better ride off on his stick ; while his father, flushing crimson, and knitting his brows, said in a threatening tone :

“ Charly ! hold your tongue ! you had better ! Don’t interrupt every one ! ”

The little boy started, but did not attempt to say another word, and cowered under the table till breakfast was over, when he ran out of the room before the rest quitted it. The Hillyards took their departure immediately, and Alice sat down to her employments alone in the drawing-room ; but her solitude was shortly broken in upon by the entrance of her temporary charge, who came close up to her, with a little red leather case in his hand, which he put into her’s, saying :

“Look, Miss Wentworth—look inside, and see papa’s picture.”

She opened the case, and saw, to her unspeakable amazement, a miniature of herself—the very same apparently—certainly the fac-simile of one she had given Arthur Darrell at the time of their engagement, ten years before, but which had been returned on its breaking off, and had been since bestowed by her on her cousin Sophy. She could scarcely believe her eyes; yet there it was before her, the same striking and exact representation of herself at the age of eighteen; and she was conscious that, by resuming the style of hair portrayed in it, the resemblance to her actual self was made sensible, and accounted for the child’s exclamation at breakfast.

"It is my picture!" cried she, at once.

"Charly, where did you find this?"

"In papa's dressing-case, at the bottom."

"And have you often seen it?—seen it at home, before you came to England?"

"Yes, when papa is dressing, he lets me play with the things in it."

"In what?"

"In his dressing-case. If you will come, I will show you where. It has curls just like you to-day, has not it?"

Alice made no reply. She sat contemplating the picture which the child still held before her, and was about to recommend its speedy restoration to its abode in the dressing-case, when she heard a step behind her; and Arthur Darrell, rushing forward,

seized Charly with one hand, and the picture with the other, asking him, in a voice of fury, "what he meant by meddling with what did not belong to him?"

The boy literally quivered in his father's angry grasp, and shrunk towards Alice, who involuntarily threw her arm round him. Darrell's eyes met hers, and at sight of their half-sorrowful, half-reproachful expression, he let Charly go, raised his hand to his forehead, and hurried out of the room, carrying the picture away with him. As he went upstairs, he heard sounds of loud lamentation issuing from the drawing-room, and his heart smote him for his unjust violence to such a gentle and innocent little being; but in a moment he hardened himself, muttering between his set teeth: "There is no use

pitying *him* ; she will kiss and comfort him enough. In two minutes he will be as happy as ever !" And he locked himself up in his own apartment, whence he stirred not till late in the forenoon.

Charly, meanwhile, continued to cry bitterly in Alice's lap, exclaiming between each sob : " Papa is so angry !" but now and then varying his complaint to the words, " He always let me play with it ! He never told me not !" —expressions of injured innocence, on hearing which, Alice caressed him tenderly, and assured him " that she was certain he had not meant to do anything wrong ; only he must not bring any of his papa's things down-stairs another time." By degrees, the torrent of his grief spent itself and he promised Miss Wentworth " that

he would be good:" but he was wofully stupid at his lessons, which his instructress shortened, in compassion to him and herself.

When they were over, she delivered him to the old coachman to have his ride on the pony ; and having hastily smoothed away her curls, and resumed the head-dress which was now habitual to her, she went out with the intention of going to see an old woman in the village. But unable to compose her thoughts immediately after the strange things that had befallen that morning, she lingered in one of the garden walks ; and before a minute was over, tears flowed from her eyes as fast as they had from Charly Darrell's an hour before.

It would be difficult to define what chiefly

occasioned such strong emotion. It was rather caused by a combination of feelings, of recollections, partly similar, partly contrary to each other.

“How wonderful!—how incomprehensible!” thought she, “that this man should keep and carry about him a monument of times which all the main actions of his life would lead one to suppose he either forgets, or looks back on with hatred! He must have had this copy made in the interval of my asking for the original and his returning it. It will be ten years since next winter. I remember we thought he was very long restoring it. Can he have been solely moved by a base vanity to wish to possess the likeness of one, who, he knew, was sought by many, yet had only con-

fessed love to him? Or can there be anything in Philip Bramstone's vague and—as I must ever think them—utterly groundless surmises? That he is a miserable man now, is plain; but he has enough to make him so, without searching deep for the causes; and its being his own fault, but aggravates the misery. How changed he is from the sweet-tempered Arthur Darrell I once knew!—how sadly changed! My flesh crept as he laid hold on that poor child, of whom he, at other times, appears so passionately fond! All I see, proves to me more and more how much better Heaven orders everything for us than we should ourselves. How wretched I should have been with such a man!” And having reached this point of her medi-

tation, without pushing it farther into the question, "Would he have been such, united to me?" she dried her tears, composed her countenance, and proceeded to visit old Betty Oakes, with whom she sat about half an hour.

A considerable time had elapsed since Miss Wentworth had experienced so much of the shadow of old times passing over her. Even the discussion concerning Arthur Darrell's coming, and his actual arrival though excessively painful to her, had not set her off her balance, if the expression may be used ; while this morning's adventures had done more than she was herself aware to shake the steady calm in which her inner being had long reposed. The deep-seated love, which, quenched once

before, had kindled into such absorbing passion at the time of her meeting with Darrell six years back, had found no speedy cure. She did not sink into melancholy, did not yield herself to indolence or seclusion; and yet it was not till she was near six-and-twenty that she could, in strict confession, have called herself "fancy free."

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From that time she had rested in a full conviction of the thorough unworthiness of the object of her preference; and there is no such remedy for love as genuine contempt. This being the case, there was no exaggeration or self-deception in the expressions she used concerning him in her letters to her cousin Sophy; but it may be nevertheless easily understood that, on regaining the

liberty of her heart at an age when unmarried women generally begin to think themselves old, whatever proofs to the contrary may surround them, Alice Wentworth, a calm and sobered woman, no longer inclined to take more of the amusements of society than what her position almost unavoidably led her into, was more fastidious, less liable to be suddenly taken by the attractions or advantages of any connection that offered, than the general liveliness of her manner would have led the world to suppose. She had therefore remained unmarried, notwithstanding her many opportunities of being suitably, even splendidly established.

It was not from any overweening ambition, not from any romantic vow, nor yet

from not appreciating the advantages of a really happy marriage; but chiefly from the disinclination to make a definitive choice, not unnatural in one who felt incapable of being moved by any strong preference, whose mind had been rendered slightly suspicious by the occurrences of her own youth, and whose situation, above all, afforded her (with yet greater independence) many of the occupations, and even some of the interests, which generally belong to married women only.

Such was the mood in which she had existed for the last three years, and such the mood which she had maintained up to that very morning, when she was momentarily stirred from it. The shock, however, was truly momentary; her equilibrium was soon restored; and she returned from Betty

Oakes' cottage as composedly and as much occupied by the old woman's sufferings and requirements as she would have been the day before. On the steps of the house she met her uncle, who instantly exclaimed :

“I cannot think what has come over Arthur. Did you notice if he had a foreign letter to-day? There he has been telling me he finds he must shorten his visit—is obliged to go back to Lausanne within a day or two! Did you ever hear such folly? I asked if he had had bad accounts of any of his family. He could not exactly say he had ; but he must go—‘there was a necessity—it was unexpected’—not that he can tell me the nature of it. I suppose the truth is, he is bored to death here ; and all the Eng-

lish feeling, and family affection for which I gave him credit, cannot stand against the monotony of a fortnight at his old uncle's in the old Manor House. Well, he must do as he pleases. I certainly expected him to stay six weeks at least, and he knew that. Let him do as he pleases—but then I shall do as *I* please too.”

“It is very extraordinary,” began Miss Wentworth; when, by the ringing of the luncheon bell, and Charly running out to confirm the intelligence its sound announced, she was relieved from the necessity of farther reply. But it flashed on her that the nephew's resolution had been inspired by the events of the morning, and that the uncle, on his side, was probably taking one which would be far from beneficial to the interests

of the latter. She was confirmed in this last conjecture by her uncle's saying during luncheon, at which Arthur did not appear :

“ I dare say it is best after all that he should remain abroad. He has got used to it, though he says he does not like their ways ; and such people are not fit to be put in a position where it is their duty to live in their own country.”

She was struck by a painful idea of being the indirect cause of injury to the fortunes of a man, who had indeed deeply wounded her, but whom she had long forgiven, and on whom she had always resolved that she would never take any revenge, were it in her power, save that of conferring benefits. She therefore determined at once to speak to him.

She felt she could do it with perfect self-possession; she rejoiced, perhaps, a little in the proud pleasure of requiting good for evil; and as soon as luncheon was over, she went into the little drawing-room where she expected to find him, nor was she deceived. He rose on her entrance, and would have walked out upon the lawn, had she not said to him, in a grave but mild tone:

“Will you stop for a minute to hear something I have to say?”

He complied, seated himself without speaking, and she began as follows:

“My uncle has just been telling me how surprized and vexed he feels at your unexpected intention of shortening your visit. He cannot in any way account for it, and he

appears to me not a little hurt. If it be indeed the case that any unavoidable necessity, which you cannot explain to him, recalls you to your family, of course everything must yield to that. But, if any consideration short of real, of absolute necessity, has led you to this decision, surely you would do better to take no hasty step; surely you would do well to reflect before you did anything irretrievable; especially when you consider that you *have* encountered the main trouble, the main difficulty; and when before another fortnight is over you may expect the return of Mary Thornton, who will be so glad to see you! I confess too I should regret Charly's going away without knowing his cousins. I think you might afterwards repent of so hasty a resolution."

She paused ; and he said :

“ You may be right ; you are at all events very good to interest yourself in—but,” he hesitated ; and she rose, saying gently :

“ But you will think of this ? You will not be in a hurry ? and will reflect ? Will you not ?”

“ Since you think it right, yes !” answered he, rising also.

“ I am sincerely glad of it,” replied Alice, who then called Charly, and having desired him to stay with his papa till she had got ready to take him in the carriage to Cranfield, she left the room. Darrell, who perfectly understood the aim of her speech, remained leaning against a window, humbled to the dust, loathing himself, his lot, his

whole life, his visit to England ; yet yielding himself passively to the necessity, or duty, of staying where he was, and trusting that his present torment would gradually wear into apathy.

He was roused from his torpor by the touch of a little hand, and turning round saw Charly looking up at him, and saying rather timidly :

“ Papa, Miss Wentworth said I was to stay with you till she is ready.”

He took him up and kissed him, which seemed to put the little fellow's heart at ease, and in a few seconds Alice's voice was heard from the hall summoning him ; when his father, after waiting till the carriage was clear off, went in quest of his uncle, and informed him, to his great satisfaction, “ that,

on consideration, he thought he might manage to remain in England as long as he had at first hoped. At all events, that he need not depart immediately."

CHAPTER V.

Tutti diccon ch' io sono galante,
Ho un bel labbro, un bell' occhio un bel busto !
Tante grazie . . che gusto, che gusto !
Tante grazie mi fanno piacer !

Quelle donne che stanno a finestra
Mi fan scherzi, sorrisi, ed inchini ;
E non sanno ch'ho pochi quattrini,
Chè le pago col farmi veder !

ITALIAN SONG.

DURING the two or three days which followed, it seemed to Arthur Darrell as if, without any management on his own part,

he never found himself, even for a moment, alone with Miss Wentworth, who, however, conversed easily and cheerfully at dinner and in the evening, and seemed resolved to show by her manner that she chose neither to remember nor understand the picture adventure. In his interview with her on the afternoon of the day when it occurred, he was too much awe-struck for reflection; but on revolving it afterwards in his mind, the remembrance of it served rather to make him more at peace with himself than he had been, inasmuch as it had shown him a thing he could never before venture to believe, in spite of her courtesy and ease of manner; namely, that she had freely forgiven him. Yet, he by no means misinterpreted the nature of that forgiveness; the very absence of all guarding

against misinterpretation on her part, the thorough straightforwardness of her bearing towards him, would have precluded any such idea, even had he respected her less, or had vanity retained more empire over him. Being more at ease with his own heart, and more fully satisfied that whatever griefs he had formerly wrought Alice Wentworth, she was now contented with her lot, the oppressive sense of shame penetrated him less corrodingly ; and he was therefore better able to take his part in the everyday intercourse into which they were compelled, and could look forward more patiently to the end of the fortnight, which was to terminate the present state of things.

One day, not long after these occurrences, he and his uncle set out on a drive together,

and had taken Charly up with them to go as far as the end of the avenue, where he was to be restored to the charge of Mrs. Brown, Miss Wentworth having ridden to Cranfield. They had reached the middle of the noble row of elms, when they perceived a man on horseback entering at the Lodge gate.

"Who can that be?" said Mr. Darrell.

"Can you make out who it is, Arthur?"

Arthur could not tell, for he did not recognize the person; but Charly said at once: "It is Uncle Horace."

"Nonsense! Charly," said his father, "your Uncle Horace is in Yorkshire."

"It is a stranger, at all events," observed Mr. Darrell; "for never have I set eyes on either man or horse."

They drew nearer, and Arthur Darrell exclaimed :

“By Heaven it is Horace! What the devil has brought him here?”

“To see you, I suppose, Arthur,” said his uncle drily ; while Horace Ferrers, who was by this time quite close to them, came up and shook hands with Arthur Darrell and Charly.

Darrell would fain have avoided introducing Ferrers to his uncle ; but aware as he was that if he delayed the ceremony, his brother-in-law would probably perform it for himself, he reluctantly and stiffly went through the form.

“You are going out, I see,” began the visitor, “and I would not disturb your plans for the world ; but you see I have just ridden

over from Netherbridge (the name of a watering-place which was just within what even Horace considered a 'stiffish ride' from Mr. Darrell's), so I will go on and sit with Miss Wentworth till you are back again."

Well as he knew Horace, this cool announcement almost confounded Arthur Darrell, while his uncle whispered :

"Does Alice know him? Met him abroad, I suppose."

"Miss Wentworth is out riding," said Arthur Darrell; "but I know my uncle will excuse me, so Charly and I had better get out at once. And perhaps I can go with you to-morrow, Sir, to the Clintons?"

"Nothing in the world to prevent it,"

replied Mr. Darrell. "I shall just go the round by Workingham to-day, and you will stay with Mr. Ferrers."

Accordingly his nephew and grand-nephew alighted; a groom took the place of the latter, and Arthur Darrell, sorely against his will, went back towards the house beside his brother-in-law, who walked his horse along the avenue, and asked him forthwith "Why he looked so 'blue' while he was introducing him to the old gentleman?"

"Why really, Horace, I thought for a moment I might as well let it alone. You are come here to see me, which is extremely kind of you; but there cannot be anything very congenial between you and my uncle."

"Congenial! I should rather think not!

that is too good a joke. Congenial! but, my dear fellow, do you never introduce any but congenial souls to each other?"

"Well, I mean that I did not suppose either you or he were anxious to make each other's acquaintance, that is all."

"I do not know about him," replied Horace; "but as to me, I just think one gets on better when one has passed through the form with the master of a house one is in. Has Miss Wentworth been long out?"

"She set off just before my uncle did."

"How provoking! If I had been here ten minutes sooner, I dare say you could have mounted me (for Haidée has had enough for the present, coming from Nether-

bridge), and we should have had a famous gallop. She is a capital horsewoman ; do not you think so ?”

“ Who ? Miss Wentworth ? ”

“ Why you did not think I meant Haidée ? ”

“ Yes, she rides very well,” said Darrell, inwardly thanking Heaven for her absence ; “ but I am sorry, Horace, that you have troubled yourself to come over. I thought you were at Scarborough ; but if you had let me have a line, telling me where you were, I would have ridden over to you ; and I do not know if that would not have been altogether the better plan of the two.”

Horace cast a most knowing look at his brother-in-law, and said with a rather

patronizing, but perfectly good-humoured smile :

“A better plan, you think! I will tell you what, Arthur, you are uncommonly agreeable; and as I have lately noticed, remarkably obliging; but I have not given myself and Haidée this trouble, solely and only for the pleasure of seeing you, though I have no objection to your company or Charly’s either, for fault of better. I am come here for my own purposes, which cannot interfere with any of your’s, unless, indeed, you fancy that the old boy may take a spite to *you*, if he sees me go near his niece, and may make you the worse for it. If that is it, and you will tell me so honestly and fairly, why I will stand off till she is in her own house again. I can afford to wait

that much, and would do it, though you were so stiff about introducing me at the Brunnen Place. But you must be plain with me, as I have been with you. Is that at the bottom of the matter?"

"No, it is not," said Darrell, as they reached the house door, and Haidée was given to a groom. "No; I had never thought of being annoyed by your visit on *that* score," continued he, as they both seated themselves, "though I believe it would serve my turn best to tell you I had; but it is not so. That I am annoyed, I do not pretend to deny; and the reason is—believe and understand me or not, as you will—the reason is, that I would rather, if I could help it, avoid showing you to my relations in the

character in which you think fit to put yourself forward just now."

"And what is that character?" asked Horace, quietly; "you may as well give it me cheap while you are about it. I never take offence at nonsense."

"Then, if you will have it," replied Darrell, "it is that of a determined fortune-hunter; and of about as self-confident a fellow as I have had the luck to come near for some time past."

"Nothing worse?" said Ferrers, laughing. "Well, if that's all, I do not see you need be so particularly ashamed of me; every one does his best to mend his fortunes—each in his own line; and if mine happens to be—what it is—I don't know why a fellow who gets his money in the Stock Exchange is

thought more respectable by some folks than one who would like to teach an uncommonly fine woman the way to spend her's ; and as to confidence, it makes one absurd or not, according as it is well or ill-founded. Any how, I bargain for what is thought of me, provided, I get my opportunities ; and why should you care more than I do *myself?*"

" Why, indeed !" echoed Darrell. " But, Horace," continued he, " this confidence of yours is in the present case decidedly ill founded, and you will simply make yourself ridiculous by what you are about. I have known Alice Wentworth longer than you ; you have found her very good-natured in her manner, so she is to every one she does not downright hate ; but for anything beyond,

you are as far from it here as in Germany or at the North Pole, and you will recollect that every day you spend in England brings a certain hazard with it. I almost wonder you have been let alone so long."

"Oh, I have taken my measures; I am pretty safe till such time as—it will be seen which knows the lady best, you or I. In the meanwhile, as I am of course to believe implicitly what you say of not objecting to my visiting here on any ground that affects your interests, I look on myself as free to manage the best way I can without loss of time. I am come to England on my own resources—owe no favour to any one, and mean to go through with what I came for."

"I am not inquiring into your resources," said Darrell; "that is your own affair; and

as to the matter in hand, I see you are resolved to go your own way, which of course you must take. I wish it may not lead you into a worse scrape than you have been in yet. I shall neither make nor meddle. You will get neither help nor hindrance from me ; so you are neither to look for the one, nor to suspect the other—at least, I shall tell the people here no more harm of you than they find out of themselves.”

“ Well, I ask no more,” said Ferrers ; “ of course, I think you might show a little more good-nature ; but you have your own superfine notions (what good they ever did you, I can’t for my life make out), and I am not to expect you will give them up ; so there is no use arguing any more, and you may as well show me the stables.

What kind of a stud does the old fellow keep?"

The stables were inspected; Horace approved and criticized with great judgment, and inquired of Darrell in what sort of order the corresponding department was kept at Cranfield.

"Very good, I dare say," was the answer; "but I cannot give you any particulars, not having seen them myself."

"Not seen them!" exclaimed Ferrers.

"No, I have not been to Cranfield at all."

"Not been to Cranfield yet!" repeated Horace. "I see I shall have to show you the lions of it after all!"

As they went out into the court-yard again, Charly, who had returned from his walk

with Brown, ran up, calling out at the top of his voice :

“ Miss Wentworth is come back. Look, papa, there she is !” and he pointed to her as she rode up the avenue. “ Uncle Horace, do you know her ?”

“ Yes, very well ; as well as you do, you little goose,” said Horace, directing his steps towards the avenue entrance. “ There she comes, sure enough.”

“ By what infatuation you can imagine—” began Darrell in an under tone.

“ My dear fellow,” interrupted Ferrers, “ all these things may be called infatuations ; but I know very well that, had you ever had half such a chance of her you would not have been best pleased with any one who had told you to fling it away.”

By this time they were at the door, which Alice reached at the same moment, and was immediately helped to dismount by Ferrers, who began to dilate eagerly on "his disappointment in not meeting her in Yorkshire, where," he said, "her uncle's name was not in the best odour for having made her break her engagements to a dozen people, who did not know how to get through the summer now. There are the Spottiswoods, the Wilmots—" but he was prevented from finishing his list by Alice's inquiry, "how long it was since he had left the Spottiswoods' neighbourhood?"

"Not many days. I am now at Netherbridge with my brother Alfred, whom you knew formerly; and hearing from my sister

that Arthur was here, I thought I might as well ride over. Is that your uncle come home?" added he, looking out of the window, whence Mr. Darrell was to be seen getting out of his phaeton. "He has not taken much of a drive, Arthur—but where is he gone? where is Arthur?"

"He left the room just after you turned to the window," replied Miss Wentworth.

"Oh, did he?" said Ferrers, carelessly, and sitting down again. "This is a very fine old place of his uncle's—your uncle's, too, I believe, Miss Wentworth. But I hear every one say that for beauty, both of situation and arrangement, it bears no comparison to your house at Cranfield."

"They are so totally different," answered

Alice, "that I cannot imagine any comparison being made between them."

"I understand," rejoined he; "but I hope before I leave this country to have an opportunity of seeing which style pleases my eyes best. In the meantime, I have a favour to ask, Miss Wentworth. I have not fired a shot yet, though it is September. Will you give me a day in your covers, which they tell me are the best about here?"

"I should be happy to do so," said Alice, somewhat startled at his request, and not very desirous that Cranfield covers should afford him a road into Cranfield Lodge; "but the fact is that, having rarely guests who make use of them, except Mr. Bramstone, who is spending this autumn abroad,

I am in the habit of placing them at my uncle's disposal for his visitors; and this morning at breakfast he asked me if his nephew might not shoot over my ground as well as his, so that I must refer you to your brother-in-law."

"Thank you," said Ferrers, "it all comes to the same thing, and I have no doubt they will bear dividing between him and me. Do you ever take rides in the Nether-bridge direction, Miss Wentworth? Nether-bridge itself would be too far for you, I suppose?"

"Much too far; but I have sometimes ridden on that road—not often though."

"Oh, it is far less pretty than this immediate neighbourhood. I was only thinking, as one does think sometimes, of

what one would like, rather than of what is probable. But I cannot forget the rides at Baden. Why one should not have as pleasant in England I don't know, where there is everything to make them as good, and better — but here is Arthur back again."

"Horace," said Darrell, who looked a good deal discomposed, "my uncle desires me to say that, as it is not in his power to offer you a bed to-night, he will not, at this distance from Netherbridge, ask you to stay to dinner; but he told me to ask you to dine and sleep here any day next week that suits you and me. Can you fix one now?"

"Oh, Monday if you please," replied Ferrers; "but as your uncle only scruples

showing me his hospitality to-day in kind consideration lest I should break my neck riding back on a moonless night, you may tell him I am exceedingly obliged to him, but will take the risk and stay dinner. Haidée will be all the fresher for carrying me home."

Darrell's brow clouded, but he said nothing, and Ferrers did not seem to notice his annoyance. Miss Wentworth said, addressing the former, as she rose to leave the room :

"I will let my uncle know that we are to have the pleasure of Mr. Ferrers' company at dinner."

When she was gone, Arthur Darrell, though a good deal relieved at not having to deliver the message himself, gave

some vent to his feelings by exclaiming :

“In my life I never saw such a cool hand as you, Horace !”

“Well, and what harm ? The old chap will not eat a bit the less good dinner for my being here. But I may as well settle finally about the other time, as Monday may not suit you for both things. I want you to give me a day’s shooting, Arthur.”

“I wish you may get it, Horace,” was the reply. “Seriously,” added Darrell, “my uncle has plenty of friends of his own, and has no superabundance of game after all ; so that I could not take on myself to—”

“No one asked you to ‘take anything on yourself’ about your uncle’s preserves,

which we all know are nothing particular. It is the Cranfield covers I am thinking of, and Miss Wentworth says she has given them to you."

"Given them to me!" repeated Darrell.

"Given them for while you are here. I did not quite mean for good and all," said Ferrers.

Darrell then recollecting the conversation that had passed at breakfast, which had given him no little pain at the moment, answered immediately :

"That he understood now ; she had been so kind as to say they were at his disposal ; but," continued he, "you did not ask her for a day's shooting, did you?"

“To be sure I did! What have you to say about it?”

“Oh, nothing; only that when I called you a cool hand just now, I did not know the full extent of your right to the title. As to your day’s shooting, since it is referred to me, you can have it on Monday if you like. Now everything is settled, I hope, to your satisfaction.”

And here their conversation ended.

Miss Wentworth, in the meantime had gone to her uncle’s room; but even before she could communicate her intelligence, Mr. Darrell began :

“Alice, you have heard me vow over and over again that no Ferrers, male or female, should darken these doors in my

life-time ; and I had resolved just now, as I was driving home, that come what might, if I found this fellow here at my return I would not fancy myself obliged to show him any attention. But one can't always act up to what one would wish, or what one thinks right. On looking up as I came to the door I saw that puppy at the window ; and by him stood Arthur, looking the picture of everything that is dismal. It struck me he was in a very uncomfortable position, not authorized to do anything civil by that brother-in-law of his, and yet not able to make the fellow understand that he ought to take himself off as it was getting on towards dinner-time. So I even sent for my nephew, and told him he might ask the other to dine

and sleep for any time he chose next week—though, thank Heaven ! I have a fair excuse for not going through the ordeal to-day, since old Childers dines here (as well as Mr. Fielding); and you know since his last attack he is afraid of the night-air, so that I promised him a bed, and his servant too—clearly no room for Mr. Ferrers.”

Great and sore was Mr. Darrell's disappointment on learning in what fashion Mr. Ferrers had himself settled the matter.

“ I might have expected as much, to be sure,” he exclaimed, “ might have known that an adventurer like him, without delicacy or consideration, would never take the hint given. Well, I must swallow it—swallow

it sooner than I bargained for. Those connections of poor Arthur's are a sad drawback to him ; but as he has, I believe, put himself out of his way, perhaps fought a hard battle to come and see me, one would not like to let him have more annoyances here than one can help — not that I have any idea that this precious Horace's company is in itself at all delightful to him."

"I am inclined to think it is quite the contrary," said Alice ; " but I understand your feeling ; and from what I saw of him at Baden, I should not say Mr. Ferrers' society was unpleasant for once in a way, and under certain checks."

" Pleasant or unpleasant, it will be but for once in a way here, you may rely on

it," replied the old gentleman ; and Alice went to her room to dress.

Mr. Fielding, the clergyman of the parish, and Mr. Childers, a remarkably matter-of-fact old bachelor, now in declining health, came to dinner. Horace Ferrers was not likely to waive his privilege of conducting the lady of the house to her seat at the top of the table, and he succeeded in monopolizing her attention so much as to make Darrell, who sat at the contrary corner, wonder how she could bear with his forwardness. He had himself, from a combination of reasons and feelings, rather avoided than sought to fulfil any more duties of courtesy towards her than were absolutely incumbent on him ; and while such offices were performed for her by his uncle, and his uncle's elderly

friends, he was content that it should be so.

The sight of Horace making himself agreeable, was quite another thing; and in spite of reason, her endurance of him made him, at some moments, waver in his certainty that "she would never think of such a fellow." The next minute, it is true, he rebuked himself for a suspicion so injurious to her; nevertheless, the dinner seemed to him interminable, and the evening no less so; for there was no one to dispute with Horace the seat in which he chose to establish himself by Alice, nor to break in upon his almost exclusive entertainment of her, unless Darrell himself had mounted guard on the other side, by doing which he would have exhi-

bited too glaring a contrast to his usual manner.

The time, however, did at length come when his brother-in-law could no longer delay his departure. The night was pitch-dark, but Horace told Mr. Darrell "that he could always feel his way somehow—that he had spent a delightful evening—and well worth a longer ride." It need scarcely be added that he reached his destination in perfect safety.

Mr. Darrell made no remark whatever upon him in his nephew's hearing; but from the way in which he expressed himself to his niece and to Mr. Childers, it was plain that Horace's actual presence had no ways diminished the prejudice felt against him as "a Ferrers and an adventurer."

Miss Wentworth was more patient of his company ; not that she saw anything taking in his confident look and manner, nor anything either witty or interesting in his unceasing rattle ; but she was at times amused (as she had said to her cousin Sophy) by the *naïveté* with which he laid open all his views and principles, in which it never occurred to him that “ a woman of the world like her ” could find anything objectionable ; and she was moreover not ill-pleased to have any addition, especially a talkative one, to the exclusive company of her uncle and Arthur Darrell, so as to be freed from the necessity she often felt of “ getting up ” a certain amount of conversation with the latter, while the former slept or read the paper.

This, as may be supposed, was not always an easy undertaking. As regarded old times, they had too much—as regarded the present, too little in common. The Bramstones afforded an occasional resource ; but even that subject had its unsafe sides, and did not bear handling too often.

Alice had, during the last few years, recurred a good deal to the employments and studies, of which (interrupted as they had been between the ages of eighteen and twenty-four) her early education had given her both the taste and the habit ; but Arthur Darrell, although as capable as any man of being carried away by tales of daring adventure or passionate interest, was not, in the usual acceptation of the term, “a reader.” She therefore knew there was

no help to be obtained from literature; and she thus often took refuge in detailing any little proof of simplicity or goodness of disposition with which Charly's history for the day might furnish her.

This answered the purpose of breaking dead silences without entering on dangerous grounds, and was generally replied to in a manner which showed gratitude as well as interest—so much so, that she once said to herself “that she would have to invent ‘Charlyana,’ should the trifles which supplied them chance to fail.” Still there was a certain labour attached even to this degree of conversation; and she looked to Horace Ferrers' appearance on Monday without any of the repugnance which Darrell had expected to see her indicate, if not express.

“Is it possible,” thought he, “that after all, he should know her better than I? or is she only so wearied by the silence and moroseness of the man to whose daily company she is condemned, as to be inclined to give apparent encouragement to the boldness of any other? It may be so—but I am less surprized at Horace than I was, though I must and will think that he deceives himself, till I am forced to change my opinion.”

CHAPTER VI.

La fuerza del fuego que alumbra, que ciega
Mi cuerpo, mi alma, mi muerte, mi vida,
Do entra, do hiere, do toca, do llega,
Mata, y no muere, la llama encendida !

OLD SPANISH POEM.

SUNDAY came ; and Mr. Darrell, who had been slightly indisposed the day before, was too unwell to stir from the house. As Arthur Darrell, Miss Wentworth, and Charly were walking home from church, the former said :

"I shall put off Ferrers. It will never do to have him here to-morrow, with my uncle so far from well. Should not you say so?"

"If you think it best," answered Alice. "But I should not have supposed he need have interfered with my uncle."

"No, not exactly interfered—of course, I should not let him—but he would prevent my being as much with my uncle as I should wish—as he would like me to be. No, he will be better away."

"It is according as you feel about it," said Alice. "In itself, it cannot signify."

Something in these words, indifferent as they were in themselves, appeared to have

the effect of hurting her companion, or throwing him into some painful train of thought; for he uttered not another syllable, and his countenance became unusually clouded.

Alice dared not seek for the meaning of this, and feared to renew the conversation on the subject of Ferrers' coming; so that being unwilling to conclude the walk in sullen silence, she recurred, as they came within a few yards of the house, to her one safe topic, relating how Charly had confided to her "that Uncle Horace, the day he dined there, had wanted him to say 'How do you do, old cock?' to Uncle Darrell, but in vain, 'for that would have been rude.' "

Darrell laughed, and brightened up, saying :

"I am glad Charly was too shy, or too good, whichever one may call it, to do his bidding. I have made up my mind to put Horace off," added he, after a short pause. "You see no objection?"

"None in the world: I think you are most likely right," replied Alice, who now guessed that he was too glad of a pretence to put off what he himself disliked so much; and a note was dispatched that afternoon for the purpose of deferring Ferrers' visit to a later day in the week.

Next morning Mr. Darrell proved no better, and he was condemned to keep his room that day, and probably the next; on learning which decision, Alice secretly regretted Horace Ferrers, inasmuch as

she perceived that a *tête-à-tête* evening with Arthur Darrell awaited her. Whether the same reflection occurred to him, also, after it was impossible to remedy the inconvenience, she could not tell; but she determined to break, as far as she could, the threatened state of dead gloom, or laborious effort for conversation during dinner, by securing the presence of a third person in the shape of Charly, who was invited as a great treat to sit at table with his papa and Miss Wentworth, on condition he should "not ask for anything," but content himself with a good-sized piece of cake, which kept him employed during most part of the time. This expedient succeeded to a wish as far as dinner went; for Charly, being in high spirits, talked

nonsense enough to be considered amusing, and to give an impulse to a certain degree of conversation between his elders. When it was over, and the trio adjourned to the little drawing-room, the child ran before, and seeing a fire lighted (as was usual at Darrell Place if the evening happened to be damp or chilly) he proceeded to exert his exuberant activity in dragging an arm-chair to each side of it ; having done which, he cried :

“ There is your place, papa, and there is yours, Miss Wentworth, and I in the middle, just like at home.”

The pair sat down in the places Charly assigned them, but without the smiles which his observations had called forth during dinner. Alice desired him to bring her

knitting from the table. He obeyed, and having done so, climbed upon his father's knee, where he had not been long stationed before he exclaimed :

“Why don't you talk, papa?”

No answer came, unless a request “that he would sit still,” might be called so.

“Charly,” said Alice, “I should like to hear you repeat again the verses you learnt so nicely this morning.”

He then left his father, and standing beside her, recited the little poem very fairly. When it was finished, and he had received his father's praise, and his instructress's approval, he held up his mouth to her, saying :

“Give me a kiss—you did this morning : I have said it quite good.”

The kiss was hastily given, but Charly thereupon took such a fit of tenderness, and clung so to Miss Wentworth, that she said : “ You must let me alone, Charly dear—you hinder me from knitting.”

“ Come here, Sir,” said his father, somewhat sharply : “ don’t tease Miss Wentworth.”

Charly went and stood by his father for a few moments in silence ; and then said, in rather an injured tone :

“ It doesn’t tease her, papa ! she likes me to kiss and love her.”

Darrell pushed his chair from the fire with a sudden jerk, and then drew it forward again, while Alice said to the child :

“Get the picture-book your Uncle Darrell gave you, and sit down quietly on the stool till Brown comes.”

He did so, and looking by the firelight at the coloured prints, of which he now and then asked and received an explanation from Miss Wentworth, all flowed again in a safe channel; while his father walked to the window, looked on the table for the day's paper, could not find it, and returned to his seat by the fire; where, holding his hand before his face as if to screen it from the blaze, he watched the couple opposite to him. At the last leaf of the picture-book were two figures on horseback, one of which Charly pronounced to be his papa, and the other Uncle Horace.

“Will Uncle Horace come here again?”

he proceeded to inquire ; and was told that he probably would.

“ When Uncle Darrell is well again ? ”

“ Yes, I believe so.”

“ Uncle Darrell is not the same uncle as Uncle Horace,” observed Charly, with a very wise look.

“ What a queer puzzle there is in that boy’s brain ! ” exclaimed his father : “ one would sometimes think he was an idiot.”

Alice, who knew better how to interpret the child’s confused manner of expressing the combinations of his mind, said distinctly and lowly :

“ Mr. Ferrers is your uncle ; but your Uncle Darrell is uncle to your papa, and what people call ‘ great-uncle ’ to you.”

"Great-uncle!" repeated Charly, laughing, "how funny! And he is your uncle too?—you call him uncle, as well as papa does."

"Yes," replied she, "he is my great-uncle, and he is uncle besides to Fred and Cissy Thornton, and little Mary, who are coming here by-and-by, as I have told you, and who are—what are they to you?"

"My cousins!" cried Charly, delighted at his own correctness of memory.

"Uncle Darrell is great-uncle to them and to you," said his father, "that is why you are cousins to each other."

"Yes," replied the little boy, still looking very much as if he were solving a problem, "and he is uncle to you and to *you*," he

added, gazing up at Miss Wentworth; "so what are you to papa?"

"Nothing at all," answered she, her eyes fixed on her knitting. "Your papa and you are no relations to me — only friends."

"Great friends!" exclaimed the child, clinging to her again. At this moment Brown appeared, and Charly, a little beyond himself from having been that evening an object of unusual attention, begged to sit up longer, remarking that candles were not yet lighted, and "that he had been very good."

"Yes, Charly," said Miss Wentworth, "you have been good; and if you will do as you are bid now, I will go up with you, and perhaps carry you."

This compromise just served to secure the little man's tottering virtue ; Alice took him in her arms, and said to his father as she went out at the door :

“I am going to my uncle, to sit with him till tea-time.”

She left the room ; and Arthur Darrell was freed from the strong curb laid on him by the presence of her whose contempt and anger he so much dreaded to excite. But the more violent the strain had been to preserve outward calmness during a scene so calculated at once to pierce and kindle his heart, the more complete was the relaxation of all manly fortitude the moment he was at liberty to bewail unseen his utter and eternal exclusion from the reality of that happiness in a mock representation of which

he had been, as it were, forced to take part.

He had himself thrown away what he now believed to be the greatest bliss on earth ; for how, save by his own vices, had he been hindered from becoming what he had been half called on by his child to personate ? the rightful possessor, namely, of one who was in his eyes not only the fairest in form, but the noblest in mind of all living women.

His unlawful pleasures had brought him under a yoke which fettered and galled him more than ever ; and it now seemed as if all that was good in his nature, all that led him to the love and admiration of what is in itself pure and noble, had leagued with the goading of unruly passion, to make him

abhor that to which he was bound, and adore that from which he had severed himself. The loss was irretrievable, that evening's mockery had been bitter; and he gave himself over to the rash wish that he might not rise again from the couch on which he had thrown himself, to endure another day, another night, of ungratified desire, of repressed affection, of unappreciated, unpitied self-reproach.

Arthur Darrell writhed in agony of soul; but no bodily organ suffered from the mental spasm; and after having yielded himself for a time to the wildest excess of sorrow, he was (as often occurs) recalled to the necessity of mastering himself by a very trivial circumstance, being no other than the sound of the servants' steps in the hall preparatory to

their bringing in tea. He started up, composed his countenance, and strove in earnest to overcome the weakness to which he had given way. He succeeded; and when Miss Wentworth came down a few minutes after, he was able to inquire of her without appearance of agitation, "how she had found his uncle, and whether he would like to receive a visit from him?"

She replied "that she thought he would, but that she did not think he ought to remain beyond a short time."

She then took up a book. Darrell left the room; and when he returned later in the evening from his visit to the invalid, he had so much got the better of the tempest which had lately raged within him, as to converse with Miss Wentworth during the remaining

half-hour they spent together with more apparent ease and liveliness than he had yet shown. He seemed to her less unlike the old Arthur Darrell. But she resolved as she went to rest that in no event should Charly ever again be called on to make a third with her and his father, either at dinner or in the evening; for though unconscious of the full amount of what he had inflicted, she thought it better to endure the most leaden *tête-à-tête* than have it broken by every fancy with which the Evil One could inspire the child for the purpose of most annoying and embarrassing them both.

Arthur Darrell passed the next day out shooting. Mr. Darrell was better, but recommended to keep his room one day more. Alice received several hints from

Charly in the course of the forenoon to the effect "that he would like extremely to sit at table again ; that he had been very good, and deserved it as well as the day before." He was, however, told "that treats could not come every day ; that he must stay with Brown as usual," and he bore the award as submissively as could be expected. Towards evening, as he and Alice were walking on the terrace before the house, they were joined by his father, who, saying every minute "that he must go in and see his uncle before the dressing-bell rang," yet lingered on and on with them to tell Charly of his sport and his dogs, and to show Miss Wentworth the exact spot in the terrace whence she could see the top of the Farnden cedar-trees, which had been the subject of conversation at

dinner a few days before. While thus employed, he caught sight of a figure advancing towards them from the contrary side of the house.

“Who can that be,” he exclaimed, “so late? Why, it is Horace! What induces him to come, when I told him we should not expect him before Friday?”

It might be supposed, considering the pain of mind he had endured the preceding evening, that Arthur Darrell would have been glad to be spared finding himself again in precisely the same situation. But, inexplicable as it may appear, he had looked forward during the whole day to its termination in the little drawing-room; and that his expectation should be disappointed by Horace Ferrers, of all beings

in the world, was too much for his equanimity.

“What does he think we are to do with him? and when my uncle knows, too, that he has been put off. I have no patience with him!”

“We must give him some dinner,” said Alice, smiling, “there is no difficulty in that; and as my uncle is in his bed-room, he cannot be annoyed by a stranger’s presence down-stairs.

Darrell replied, rather hastily:

“You are more good-natured than—”

“Than *you* are at this moment,” interrupted she.

“Well, it is stupid to be put out by anything he does, I allow,” answered Darrell; and as he spoke, Horace came up, shaking

hands with all the party, and inquiring most particularly after Mr. Darrell.

“My uncle is better to-day,” replied Arthur; “but I think, Horace, you can hardly have read my note through.”

“Oh yes, I did; you say that, because you see me here before Friday. I shall be most happy to come then early, to have my day’s shooting with you. But you see, Wharton was driving over from Netherbridge to dine with some neighbours of yours—the name is Bradshaw, I think. I saw him setting off, and it struck me he might as well give me a seat in his machine. I asked him; he has brought me, and will take me back. So, if you think the old gentleman will be put out, you need not tell him I am here (as he is in his own

quarters, I suppose) and we can settle better about Friday than we could by letter. Are you going in already, Miss Wentworth?"

"Yes, I am," replied she. "I must sit with my uncle a little before dinner."

She went into the house, leaving Charly with the men, who sat down on a bench, when Horace presently began twitching his nephew's long curls, and asked, "who had the honour of beautifying him every day now that he had not got Mrs. Sage to make a doll of him?"

Charly stared rather stupidly; but when made to understand the question, he replied:

"Brown does."

"She must have proper hard work of

it, with all these ringlets," observed his uncle.

"It is a pity they were not cut off," said his father; "for, of course, it gives trouble."

"Brown says it is not such trouble as Miss Wentworth's," said Charly.

"I am sorry to hear Miss Wentworth is so troublesome, Charly," observed Horace.

"She is not troublesome," replied he, "it's her hair. It is so long! Papa, it comes all down, when it is brushed, down to the ground nearly. She covered me up in it to-day. Was not that funny papa?"

"Very funny," replied Darrell.

"But what did she do that for?" asked Ferrers.

* "Because I wanted to hide from Brown, so Miss Wentworth cuddled me, and wrapped me all up in her hair; and Brown did not know where I was, till I laughed."

"And then, I suppose, she found there was flaxen hair under the black hair?" said his father, stroking his curls.

"Yes, and they both laughed so, and Miss Wentworth kissed me."

"The sight must be well worth seeing, Master Charly," said his uncle: "you are a lucky young dog to be shown it; and to be kissed into the bargain! But how do you come to be always in and out of Miss Wentworth's room? you have no business there!"

"Yes," answered Charly, rather as-

tonished at the remark, "for I sleep inside her room, where the canary-birds used to be."

Horace burst out laughing, declared he should not object to be as well lodged, and proceeded to try what information he could extract as to the colour of Miss Wentworth's dressing-gowns; as to whether she wore a nightcap or not; whether she looked pretty in it, &c. But Charly was provokingly dull; and would not or could not furnish any intelligence on these points.

"Cannot you leave him alone?" said Darrell, as the child went to ask something of the gardener. "What is the use of trying to make him just such another as yourself, before his time?"

"It's a good joke to hear you preach!" cried Ferrers, "as Master Charly himself will know pretty well by-and-by. In the meantime, he is a thorough 'muff,' can't give me a reasonable answer. Between you and Miss Wentworth, you make a girl of him. I wish you saw Alfred's boy, who is hardly so old; why, he is up to everything!"

"I don't doubt it," replied Darrell; "and so will Charly be one of these days. But I will thank you to spare yourself the trouble of giving him such early instruction. I would rather see him as he is."

"What has come over you, Arthur?" asked his brother-in-law. "I never saw you in this way before! I can't think what you are going to turn into! Has the old

fellow been very savage about my coming here ?”

“Not that I know of,” said Darrell ; “but there is the bell, and I must go and dress — that is the bore of being in a civilized country. Charly, come in with me.”

“Not to be left with me, of course,” muttered Horace, grinning, while his brother-in-law entered the house with the child.

During dinner Horace talked for all three ; but he could not so entirely appropriate Miss Wentworth as he had on a former occasion, as Darrell took more part in conversation than he had then done. When he and Ferrers adjourned to the drawing-room they found it empty, and it was not till after

some little time that Alice joined them, saying that she had been sitting with her uncle.

Horace observed before long "that he should be sorry if Arthur stood on any ceremony about leaving him, when he would like to pay Mr. Darrell a visit." But whether from perverseness or laziness or whatever cause, Arthur did *not* wish to visit his uncle; he did not stir from the drawing-room, and a repeated hint from Horace seemed only to nail him faster to his chair.

It grew late; Ferrers took leave of Miss Wentworth, but asked Darrell to walk with him as far as the Bradshaws', where he was to join his friend Wharton. Darrell complied, and no sooner were they out of the house than Ferrers exclaimed:

"You are not keeping faith with me, Arthur! You said I was not to expect help; no more I do. But you said you wouldn't hinder me neither!"

"Well, I don't hinder you."

"What! not hinder me, when you sit like a sentinel, or a male duenna, grudging me the natural opportunity I should have had, if you had done your duty and gone to see the old fellow, as I know you would if I had not been there: unless, indeed—"

"Unless what, Horace?"

"Unless you are deeper than—no; I was talking nonsense. But you balked me of a *tête-à-tête* on purpose."

"I cannot say I see what great good it was to do you at this stage of your affairs,"

replied Darrell ; “ and I certainly should never move a foot out of my way to procure you one, unless I thought Miss Wentworth was desirous of it too.”

“ Oh, you are extremely kind ! If my business were done, I dare say you would be very civil ! But the thing is to do it, and for that end a *tête-à-tête* comes useful at any stage ; for one never can tell where it may take one to, as you might know by this time.”

Darrell knew only too well ; but he observed coldly that such calculations were not to be hazarded without some discrimination as to the person concerned.

“ Of course—of course,” said Ferrers, “ I should not be such a fool as to risk giving offence. I think I can perceive the shades

of difference to be observed as well as any one. But there is no helping what is past, and I will not quarrel with you to-night. Only, as I am to be here again on Friday, I wished to tell you that if I am circumvented again, I shall set it down to your playing me downright false, either for the reason I originally suggested or some other. So just consider whether you wish me to be of that opinion or no."

Darrell answered, rather haughtily, that he had no wish to circumvent, or to stand between Horace and his fortune; that he had given his opinion disinterestedly; and that if Miss Wentworth chose to put up with him, it could not possibly be any business of his. Horace might walk and talk with her on Friday as much as he could and would.

It was not his habit to put himself in people's way.

"It never used to be, I know," replied Ferrers; "and that is partly why it strikes me so oddly now. Well, we understand each other, so good night; there is no use in your troubling yourself to go on to the Bradshaws."

They accordingly parted; Darrell saying to himself as he turned back: "What a fool I was to yield to temper and not gratify Horace, when, in all probability, considering his wonderful impudence, the *tête-à-tête* would have settled his case in a manner quite contrary to his expectations!" while Ferrers, the moment he was alone, speculated on "What the devil it could be that

‘worked’ Arthur so much in his plans? The good joke too of his teaching *him*! as if he was not up to anything Darrell could tell him! See if I do not pay him off too for preaching to me about Charly!” was his conclusion.

CHAPTER VII.

Her hair in hyacinthine flow,
When giv'n to roll its folds below,
Where, 'mid her handmaids in the hall,
She stood superior to them all.

Hath swept the marble where her feet
Gleamed whiter than the unfa'ln sleet,
Ere from the cloud which gave it birth,
It fell, and caught one stain of earth.

BYRON'S GIAOUR.

NEXT day, Mr. Darrell, was so much better as to come down-stairs to dine with his nephew and niece. To the latter he

remarked, in the course of the day, that he was very glad he had not let her put off some company that had been invited to dinner for Friday, as he now felt he should be quite equal to seeing his friends; and since they were to have "that forward puppy" to the house, it signified less when there was a party, which might keep him in some sort of check.

Friday came; Mr. Darrell was perfectly recovered, and endured pretty patiently the arrival of Horace in his brother Alfred's dog-cart with all his paraphernalia for shooting during the day, and fascinating in the evening.

Darrell was at some pains not to disturb various little opportunities (as his brother-in-law called them) which he found or made

for talking apart to Alice both before and after his enjoyment of the Cranfield covers. It was plain, however, that his case was not settled either way in any of these brief *tête-à-têtes*; for in truth, though a stranger to the feeling of shyness, whether constitutional or mental, Ferrers found an unexpected difficulty in pushing home what he considered his advantages, something like that one might feel in grasping a body which, to the sight, appeared dry and firm, but proved, at the touch, too slippery and too smooth to afford any hold. For this he could not account, but supposed great heiresses might have something peculiar about them. They were worth studying, however, and the loss of a little more time could be afforded where it was sure to be so well repaid.

As he was proceeding to his room to dress for dinner, he happened to meet Charly, and invited him to come and look at his studs and chains; with the inspection of which, as well as with his uncle's conversation, he was so much pleased as to stay with him during the whole process of his toilet.

Miss Wentworth was the first dressed of the party in the house, and Ferrers and his nephew found her sitting alone in the drawing-room, when they entered it together. Charly got upon the sofa on which she was seated, and stood behind her, playing with the tassels of the cushions; while his uncle, after praising the sport afforded by her domains, showed her a print which he said he had found at Netherbridge

the day before, representing a view of the German Brunnen, where he had first met her.

While her attention was thus engaged, Charly suddenly laid hold of her comb, and drew it from her head. The heavy coils of hair began to fall, and she instinctively raised her hand to support them, while Charly, beside himself with glee at the success of the first part of his frolic, seized the dark shining mass, and quickly threw it into the wildest disorder, exclaiming, as it rolled from her shoulders to the ground :

“Now cover me up—cover me up! Papa won’t know where to find me!”

Alice rose from her seat, and endeavoured to keep him off, hoping to make her escape

before her uncle or any of the guests appeared; but as the child clung to her he gave a pull to a bracelet, the threads of which broke instantly, and the pearls which composed it lay scattered on the floor.

All this, though long in description, was the work of a few seconds; and before another second had elapsed, Horace Ferrers was seeking everywhere for these "pearls of price," to deliver them to their owner, who, kneeling on the ground, was helping in the search herself. She grew impatient for its termination, as Horace became more and more officiously familiar; till at length, stooping over her as she knelt, and presenting a number of pearls with one hand, with the other he lifted a portion of the dark tresses

which hung around her like a veil, exclaiming :

“ You should let me have this one lock in exchange !”

The words were scarcely spoken, when Arthur Darrell opened the door. He stood still a moment, amazed at what he saw ; while Alice, springing to her feet, and colouring deeply, said in a hurried and offended tone :

“ Let go my hair, Mr. Ferrers !”

“ What is the meaning of this ?” said Darrell, walking angrily up to his brother-in-law.

“ Only a trick of that young gentleman’s,” said Ferrers, coolly, pointing to Charly, who, missing the smiles and caresses, as well as the game of play he

had expected, stood a little apart, looking very blank, but still holding in his hand the proof of his guilt—Alice Wentworth's comb, namely.

His father, unable now to vent on Horace himself the rage his presumption had excited, turned in blind passion upon the child, asked roughly "why he had done such a thing?" and receiving no answer, caught hold of him, shook him violently, and then carried him out of the room and up the stairs.

Charly resisted with might and main, but his screams and struggles only served to increase Darrell's anger; and the little boy soon found himself alone, locked up in his father's room, with his hands tied behind him.

While this dismal scene was enacting in one part of the house, Alice was again delayed, first by the necessity of accounting to her uncle for her dishevelled locks, and then by the announcement of old Mr. and Mrs. Estcourt, who followed so closely on the servant's footsteps that there was no escape, and the same tale had to be told over again.

There seemed little chance of being ready in time for dinner, and in truth the last guest arrived before Miss Wentworth was fit to appear. She sent a message to her uncle, begging him not to wait dinner for her; but Mr. Darrell, a good deal put out by his niece's absence, and by the misadventure which caused it, seemed only the more resolved on so doing; while he observed

testily to his nephew, "that Alice was spoiling that boy, and he thought he might do what he liked."

Horace Ferrers, to give him his due, was of great assistance in whiling away the time ; for he talked incessantly, and made every one merry with the account of his little nephew's misdemeanour, till Miss Wentworth at length appeared, and all adjourned to the dining-room.

Horace had, of course, his place by the lady of the house ; but Darrell thought he perceived that she gave him as little of her attention as she could, seeming far more interested in the conversation of the elderly gentleman on her left hand. She gave the signal for retiring to the drawing-room rather earlier than usual ; and being told

soon after that "some one wanted to speak to her," she excused herself to the ladies; and on leaving the apartment, met Brown, who informed her "that Master Charly was not getting to sleep, and said he could not stop crying till Miss Wentworth came," adding, with a face of great commiseration, "I am sure you wouldn't wonder, Ma'am, if you had seen him, poor little dear, when we took him out of his papa's room!"

Alice went up-stairs, and seated herself by Charly's bed. The first effect of her appearance was a redoubling of woe; but when she threw her arm round his neck, and endeavoured to soothe him, his grief subsided a little, though he continued to sob; and he stammered out:

“Papa said—papa said you would not love me any more!”

When he grew quieter, Miss Wentworth said gently :

“What put it into your head, Charly, to be so mischievous as to pull my hair down?”

A fresh burst of tears followed, but the answer was plain enough :

“It was Uncle Horace!”

Alice was not greatly astonished, for she remembered the “Old cock” story (which had failed to take effect), but this exploit was a more disagreeable one; and she felt doubly angry on account of the unmerited disgrace of the poor child; whom, however, Horace could not have justified, as she plainly saw, without increasing his impertinence to herself.

She did her best to comfort Charly, and declared her belief in his repeated assurances "that he would never be so naughty again." She then kissed him and returned to her uncle's guests ; soon after which, Mrs. Brown had the satisfaction of seeing the penitent fall fast asleep.

Ferrers was at great pains to make himself generally agreeable that evening ; but as it was a large party, he had not the field entirely to himself, though few could match him either in volubility or self-satisfaction.

The party broke up at the usual hour, and Arthur Darrell and Ferrers were not alone together till next morning after breakfast ; when the latter, having been made aware of

the expected arrival of two old friends of Mr. Darrell's to stay a day or two, was beginning to think of his departure; not in a crestfallen state—that condition of mind was hardly possible to him—but with an undefined feeling that the frolic in which Charly had been instrumental, would have been better left alone.

“I made a mistake in asking for the hair,” thought he; “that is what has put her up so confoundedly.”

His brother-in-law, of whom he inquired with a grin, “how Master Charly was that morning?” replied, “that he was very well as far as he knew; but that it was unlucky the little rascal had chosen the evening of a dinner-party for his tricks, and that his uncle had been exceedingly put out.”

“ Oh, was he ?” said Horace ; “ and you were put out too, Arthur, more than any one else, I think. I was sorry for the poor little dog, when you laid hold of him in such a fury ; but you know I could not explain then.”

“ Explain what ?” asked Darrell quickly.

“ Why, only that I had put him up to it,” answered the other. “ You see the device was not exactly his own, though I must confess he has more ‘ go ’ in him than I fancied, for he executed it as neatly as could be.”

Darrell was on the point of making a very intemperaty reply ; but, reining himself in with effort, he was silent for some moments, and then exclaimed :

“ It must be owned you have strange

contrivances for ingratiating yourself in the quarter where you would like to push your fortunes ! Do not you perceive that Charly will never keep your counsel ? I would bet anything you have been given your fair share of the business before now."

"Well, well ! I don't care," said Horace. "Of course she must pretend to be a little stiff. It is obvious I could not say before her that it was my doing ; but for all that, a woman is never seriously angry with you for helping her to show off her best points. And why you, Arthur, who came in for your part of the view, should grudge me such a sight as one does not often see in one's life, I cannot make out. And I don't repent it — for, do you know, I

never thought her so handsome before ! and though she would not give me the hair then, it will be all the pleasanter when she offers me that same lock one of these days."

Darrell reddened and bit his lip as these last words were uttered ; nor was it unnoticed by his brother-in-law, who looked him in the face and said, with a laugh :

"I'll be hanged if I don't think you are spooney about her yourself, Arthur, and *that* is what puts you in such a devil of a humour !"

"Don't talk folly, Horace !" said Darrell, sternly.

"Folly is it ? Yes, it is great folly in you," cried Ferrers. "Whether it is

folly in me to think it, is another question."

"You are so mad yourself," replied Darrell, "that what is a few degrees more insane, appears to you quite within possibility, quite within the range of rational suspicion. But, be it a silly joke, or an idle fancy of yours, let me hear no more of it, in this house at least, if you wish to be received here."

"Certainly not, if you take it in that sort of way. I confess I did not imagine it was so serious."

The dialogue would probably have become angry, had not Mr. Darrell and Miss Wentworth joined them ; soon after which, Horace Ferrers took his leave, not, however, without saying to Alice :

“I shall live in hopes of another ‘day’ soon, from your kindness, Miss Wentworth.”

No invitation succeeded this speech, and he actually departed, apparently to the satisfaction of all the inmates of Darrell Place, including Charly, who, feeling somewhat ashamed to meet his uncle, had kept out of the way, and now first made his appearance. He did not, however, seem quite as happy as usual, and he cast uneasy looks towards his father, who was standing by a window; and though called to him, he would not stir from Miss Wentworth’s side.

“Why do not you go to your papa?” said she.

Charly made no answer; but he did not

move ; and after a minute or two he begged for leave "to go and see if the pony was ready ?" Permission was granted, and he ran off ; upon which his father said to Alice :

"I think Charly looks half afraid of me this morning !"

"I should not wonder if he were," replied Alice, smiling ; "but it will soon be forgotten."

"Then you think he really *is* afraid ?"

"Indeed I do ; and to speak truth, I am not much surprized."

"Why, he deserved some punishment ; don't you think so ?"

"Perhaps he did," replied Alice ; "though after all, in spite of the annoyance his little delinquency caused, I thought his

offence very trifling, even before I learnt, in the midst of his sobs and his penitence, that Mr. Ferrers had incited him to it."

Arthur Darrell was still boiling with the recollection of Horace's taunts, his presumption, and his unblushing confession of this very fact. He felt he could not, without peril of going too far, speak of his share in the adventure, and he forced himself to say calmly :

"That makes some difference, I allow." But after a few minutes' pause he added : "Yet, I do not know but what I am sometimes more provoked at his obeying his uncle so implicitly, than I should be if he had invented the mischief himself. It seems as if he were at the mercy of whomsoever he is with."

“At his age,” observed Alice, “he can hardly comprehend that ‘uncles’ counsels’ are not always to be followed; though I believe I understand what I feel, but I do think he would have been better punished—with better effect, I mean—if you could have—”

“Kept my temper,” interrupted he; “I have no doubt of it. Was he much frightened by being locked up last night?”

“I think he was,” replied she; “and still more so by your speaking so angrily to him.”

“I am very sorry for it—I might say, very much ashamed of it. I must make it up to the poor little fellow.”

“I am sure you will; there is no fear

on that score, I know; indeed, he very seldom requires punishment, for he has a charming disposition, and may be made everything you could wish."

"A charming disposition!—everything that could be wished!" Darrell repeated the words in a low tone, as if speaking to himself. "How often," he exclaimed aloud, "have I heard those words used—truly used at the time, for aught I know—of such as have lived to become the disappointment and misery of those who reared them—their own curse and torment! I distrust those sweet dispositions, as they are called."

"Of course they are in one sense to be distrusted," said Alice, "as all merely human good qualities must be; but though they

cannot avail alone, they are surely to be prized as being most apt to receive the impression of what is truly and unchangeably good."

"And such impressions may be given and received in the best manner, on the best of grounds ; and yet, the scene changes, the hour of temptation comes, and you may ask where the noble feelings, the high resolutions are gone !"

Alice had no desire to pursue the argument very closely, but neither did she wish to seem to terminate it abruptly ; and she replied " that there must ever be only too much of disappointment even to the most blameless of human wishes and expectations ; but," she added, " it is not only happier for us—we even are called on al-

ways to hope the best, in undertaking what we are bound not to neglect."

"Yes, if one *can* hope; but how can one with the knowledge of all that is around? I know exactly what Charly will be, do what I may with him. I have no right to expect any better; he will turn out like all the rest."

"And what should hinder him," asked Alice, "from turning out like Philip Bramstone?"

"If I could hope that," answered Darrell, "how thankful I should be! Bramstone seems to me everything that is good. He got into port in time. There might be something of luck in that, but there was more of right feeling and strength of character."

“Then what is to prevent Charly, who has the one, and can acquire the other, from doing as well?”

“If there were nothing else to come in his way,” said Darrell, with bitter earnestness. “There is his Uncle Horace.”

“I should certainly be far from thinking his company or example advantageous to any boy much exposed to it. But Mr. Ferrers does not live with you—does not, I believe, pay you frequent or long visits. I cannot understand that you should be unable to guard against his acquiring influence, if you firmly endeavour to do so.”

“It is not influence only—not example only,” answered Darrell, his countenance darkening as he spoke, “it is the blood in

his veins that I cannot drain out!" and as he uttered these words, the black scowl of his brow, the sharp contraction of his features, told more than the words themselves, of scorn and hatred bitter and unquenchable.

Alice looked with deep sorrow, not unmingled with fear, on the face she would once have supposed incapable of wearing such an expression, and tears stood in her eyes. Darrell saw and understood her look.

"You think me wicked," said he, "for entertaining such feelings. Perhaps I am."

"Not wicked," replied Alice; "I would not say that, for I cannot judge of what excuse you may have; but you are ill-advised

in giving way to them—most ill-advised in allowing yourself to look with a feeling like desperation on your child's chance of becoming, by God's help, a good, and, as far as our earthly condition admits, a happy man. Take my word for it, there is nothing in Charly's nature of what you justly despise and dislike in his uncle's. If you love him, as I am sure you do, beyond everything, you ought never, never to let such thoughts possess you."

"I would fain banish them—fain—" said he, leaning his head on his hand, "but they circle me—they entwine me; you do not know what the Ferrers's are!"

"Whatever they are," returned Alice, "I cannot bear to hear you, as it were, doom him to tread in the steps of those of whom

you think so ill. Why should he not resemble his other relations? Hope better things for him; act according to that hope, and I am sure you will be rewarded."

Darrell looked at her with reverence as well as with momentary delight; but he cast down his eyes as he ejaculated:

"I ought to believe in what you prophesy! But it is too good;—yet I will endeavour to trust in it."

He then looked up, and added:

"Do you think Charly like his Uncle Horace in appearance? Some people do."

"Not the least," answered Alice. "They are, it is true, both fair and light-haired; but neither in feature or countenance can I trace the slightest resemblance."

"I am glad to hear you say so. I cannot

see it myself; but I have been fool enough to be annoyed at times by hearing it asserted. Rationally speaking, there is no impediment to Charly's turning out as well as most—better than many, if only—if he were but during his childhood, at least, sure of living in an atmosphere of truthfulness and honesty.”

“You can surely see to that,” said Alice; but she repented of her words when she saw the dark cloud overspread his face again, as he answered:

“To a certain degree I can. Hitherto I think he has not acquired any evil of the kind most to be dreaded. How long it may be—”

“There he goes,” interrupted Alice, as the child passed the windows. “How happy

he looks on the pony ! Do go and talk to him now. I think you will see he will not look afraid of you now."

He did so ; and Charly, the current of whose ideas had been changed by his ride, greeted him with his usual smile, asking "if Miss Wentworth saw him from the drawing-room ?"

His father staid by his side till it was time for him to dismount, and then accompanied him to the drawing-room "to find Miss Wentworth ;" but she was not to be found ; for she had gone to her room, where she sat with her eyes fixed on the pages of a book which lay upon her knees ; but her thoughts were elsewhere.

Was it, indeed, true that Arthur Darrell had been on the point of making a full con-

fession of all the evils brought on him by his marriage? a full confession! and to her! It was strange, wonderful;—an hour before she would have deemed it incredible.

CHAPTER VIII.

Mi làgnerò tacendo
Della mia sorte amara,
Ma, ch' io non t'ami, O cara !
Non lo sperar da me !

METASTASIO.

MR. DARRELL was full of regrets at Alice's approaching departure. She was his favourite niece, and, as he said one day to Arthur Darrell:

“Though Mary Thornton was the best, the most affectionate creature in the world—and a great blessing to him—still she was so completely taken up (as was but natural) with her children, and their concerns, that she could talk of little else. Now with Alice,” he continued, “it is different; she can talk to you of anything you like, be it what it will—except old Childers’ Chancery suit. She is differently situated to Mary, you will say; still that is not the only thing. She has a larger mind—a greater power of interesting herself in things which do not directly concern her, or her own intimates. I shall miss her terribly the first few days; and so will Master Charly, I should think; though Miss Bennet, Mary’s governess, is a

very nice young woman, and seems to me to manage children extremely well. What shall you do, Charly, when Miss Wentworth goes back to Cranfield ?”

“Oh, I shall be so sorry !” replied he, looking very grave for a moment ; and then smiling again as brightly as usual, he added : “but I shall go and see her, and, when I go, she will let me feed the rabbits. Have you seen the rabbits, papa ?”

Before his father could confess that he had not, Mr. Darrell began to speak of something else ; and then a letter from Mrs. Thornton, which had just come in by a cross-post, was put into his hands, and he left the room, saying “that he must show it to Alice, and that he hoped the contents

would induce her to gratify both him and Mary Thornton by remaining a few days longer."

It presently appeared that she had yielded to her uncle's request ; for Charly, who had followed him, returned shortly, exclaiming :

"Miss Wentworth is to stay a whole week longer ! Are you not glad, papa ?"

No answer was returned to the question ; but his father took him up in his arms, saying :

"I do not think you are very sorry, Charly."

"No, I am so pleased !" cried the child, and ran away as soon as he was set down, to tell Miss Wentworth what he instinctively knew to be true, "that his papa was as pleased as he was."

Alice found some difficulty in keeping up conversation during the short time that intervened between her consenting to stay, and Mrs. Thornton's return; for she had now made the discovery that even Charly (hitherto her main resource as a subject of safe and plain-sailing discourse) might be the means of leading more directly than anything else to perilous themes. She did manage, however, by dint of keeping patiently within dull generalities, to steer clear of dangerous matter till her cousin came, after which everything grew easy.

Mrs. Thornton's arrival with her three younger children, attended by their governess, their nurse, her maid, &c. (the two eldest boys had returned to school), then her

meeting with her cousin Arthur, whom she had not seen for several years, and her introduction to Charly, whom she pronounced "the sweetest child she had ever beheld, except her dear Edward when at the same age" — all these events brought about a good deal of noise and talk, and promoted, for the moment, a sort of apparent liveliness, which effectually veiled, if it did not really improve, the embarrassing position in which Darrell and Miss Wentworth stood towards each other.

Mrs. Thornton knew, as did her uncle, that they had been engaged in early youth ; but it was so long ago, and both appeared to her to have so completely forgotten it, when she saw them in each other's company nearly six years and a half back, that it never occur-

red to her to speculate upon how they might now feel on meeting. What had been actually passing when she last saw them together (that is, shortly before Darrell's elopement with Lady Emily), was as much unknown to her as it was to all the world, beyond the two persons chiefly concerned and the Bramstones ; each of the four having had full and sufficient reason for observing a rigid discretion, which is *occasionally* exercised both by men and women ; though it must be confessed that its rules are not often so thoroughly obeyed by either.

Such being the extent of Mrs. Thornton's knowledge, it is not surprizing that, after bewailing to Alice the sad change in "poor Arthur's" countenance and manner, and remarking that it was perhaps not much to

be wondered at, "all things considered," she began at once to arrange the most suitable times for Charly's lessons with Miss Bennet, without making any inquiry as to how her cousin had gone through the ordeal of a month spent in the house with a former lover ; the same ignorance of the past preventing her notice of the fixed yet covert gaze with which Darrell now, more than ever, kept his eyes rivetted on Alice Wentworth while he sat silent and apart.

The week passed away agreeably ; it was not so long a time as to exhaust the family news, which formed the chief staple of conversation between Miss Wentworth and her cousin Mary ; while the little Thorntons soon became excellent friends with Charly, who

submitted resignedly to a change of instructress, though he did not take the same fancy to Miss Bennet as he had done to "dear, darling Miss Wentworth," (or "Aunt Alice," as he now learnt from his companions to call her).

The evening before her departure, Arthur Darrell spoke not one word, the conversation being wholly sustained by the two ladies and their uncle. Alice thought he might have been very tired, as he had been shooting the whole day; but whether it were so or not, his ardour for field-sports was unabated, since he went out with his gun early next morning without bidding farewell to the departing guest, or giving token that he was aware she would leave Darrell Place in a few hours.

Not so Charly: he followed Alice like her shadow till she was actually in the carriage, and then had himself lifted up to give her a last kiss, and to promise her for the hundredth time that if he found a favourite little pair of scissors, which she had missed within the last four-and-twenty hours, "he would take care of it himself, and bring it that same day to Cranfield Lodge." He preserved his equanimity as long as she was in sight; but when the carriage had fairly rolled away, a feeling of loneliness as well as grief took possession of him, and he wept aloud.

Alice meanwhile returned to her home, where, in its calm solitude, she had ample time and space to reflect on the occurrences of the last five weeks; and before

many days had elapsed, she sat down to write the following letter to Mrs. Bramstone :

“Cranfield Lodge.

“My dear Sophy,

“In the short note with which I acknowledged your last, I told you my stay at my uncle’s was prolonged, and promised to write to you more at length when I should be again settled at home. And I am now at home ; but though I have more leisure than I have had for these six weeks, and though I do owe a longer letter than any I have sent you since that ‘volume’ of the 22nd of August, I feel as if, having once told you that Mary Thornton and all her party have returned to Darrell

Place, apparently the better for their excursion from it, there were nothing more to relate, and I had only to answer your questions.

“ You say you are curious to know how my stay at Darrell Place went on to its end. Why, very quietly ; at least, nothing worthy of note took place since I wrote my last few lines to you. As to Arthur Darrell himself, I have little to add to the observations I have already made, except that I must now confess I did him great injustice when I supposed him to live in a low-minded contentment with his position. He is rather to blame for an over-sensitive pride, which leads him to exaggerate the evils he has brought on himself ; and his hatred for his wife’s family is sometimes shown in so bitter, so un-

christian a manner, as to fill me with horror, although I by no means doubt their thorough unworthiness.

“How far Lady Emily herself is excepted from his sweeping condemnation of ‘the Ferrers’, I cannot tell; but I am inclined to suspect that she comes in for her share in it. We have always made allowance for Philip’s strong prejudice when he has dilated on the ‘unloveableness’ (if one may coin such a word) of her nature; but I am now disposed to think he cannot have gone beyond the truth; not judging from her husband’s indifference—of the extent and causes of which I can necessarily only form conjectures—but from the very singular fact, as it appears to me, that Charly, who tells endless stories about his little sisters and one

Mrs. Sage, his nurse, and who appears to be an exceedingly affectionate as well as a rather talkative child, has never named his mother to me but once, his doing so that once in his father's presence, being just a proof that he is under no order to refrain from mentioning her.

“He is such an open, warm-hearted, and sweet-tempered little fellow, that I should be quite sorry to lose his company, were it not that in missing his smiling face and lively nonsense, I am also freed from witnessing the melancholy glance, the saddened deportment of his father, whom I recollect, not quite as young, but as gay and as free from care or gloom as the child now is; for the sight of his hopeless unhappiness grieves me to the soul, in spite of every-

thing, and in spite of the want of manly endurance of which his demeanour gives proof.

“Mary Thornton has renewed her old friendship with him most warmly; and she especially honours him for being, as she says in her most admiring tone, ‘so completely wrapt up in his little boy.’ Whether she would admire him as much, had she been present at one or two very violent outbreaks of his, quite undeserved by poor Charly, which I have had the pain of witnessing, may, I think, be doubted. She is full of a plan for spending a long day at Farnden, and having a sort of pic-nic dinner there, whenever her boys come home from Saturday till Tuesday. Edward has set his heart on doing so. I cannot tell you

how I dislike the notion of being of the party ; but I believe that I, or my pony-carriage, will be supposed to be useful ; so, as I have no reason to give Mary for refusing, I must not vex her by retracting the rash promise I gave when it was first proposed.

“ I was a little surprized and somewhat amused to find that, after hurrying about from one town to another as you have done, your last and longest abiding-place is to be Boulogne ! I suppose I may expect your next letter to be from thence. Give my love to Philip, and believe me ever

“ Your affectionate

“ ALICE WENTWORTH.

“P.S.—I have always forgotten to tell you that Aunt Clayton, having heard by some side wind that ‘a Ferrers’ had been seen in my company abroad, has thought it worth while to write me a grave letter of warning against the insidious arts of the Honourable Horace! I have not laughed so much for one while; and it was all I could do to compose an answer in a tone sufficiently serious for the Clayton meridian.

“In the meantime, as I am a ‘lone woman,’ and do not desire to be more canvassed in the neighbourhood than is the unavoidable fate of such, I am extremely glad that I was out paying a visit yesterday when it pleased this same Honourable Horace Ferrers to call on me; and still more glad that Slade

was obstinate in asserting that he could not tell how long I was to be absent, or where I was gone, thus depriving him of all pretext for either awaiting or pursuing me. To return to the Claytons; you must know I have perceived that Arthur Darrell, for as grave and sober as he has become, is quite up to a little enjoyment of Herbert's disappointments; and when my uncle related the story of our dear cousin's marriage with a supposed heiress, and the awful discovery made on the death of her father, that she had but fifty thousand pounds, instead of the double of that sum, he tasted it as much as Philip. I can't say more, for that would be impossible."

Miss Wentworth was sitting in the library,

in the act of closing the above letter, when she heard a well-known voice from the verandah calling out, "Aunt Alice" (which name Charly had learnt from the Thorntons to give her) ; and on her turning to look, there he was on his pony, with his father by his side. She went out to receive them, and was nearly devoured by the child's caresses, while his father told her "that Charly had given him no rest till he engaged to take him to Cranfield, as Mrs. Thornton could not drive there that day, and as he was quite unhappy till he could restore the scissors she had left behind, and which, he said, he had promised to bring her 'the moment' they were found."

Alice could but applaud Charly's zealous

regard for a given word, though she could have afforded to wait longer for the shears, which were presented in all form. When both her visitors were in the house, she found they had come "across the fields," along a foot-path leading up to the garden entrance, by which the distance from Darrell Place was little more than half what it was by the road. Knowing that there were one or two stiles in the way, she secretly wondered how the pony had performed the journey ; but her curiosity was soon satisfied by Charly, who informed her that "where Tortoise could not pass, papa pulled the bushes away, to let him get through."

Miss Wentworth was not very particular about her fences (her uncle thought her

culpably negligent); but it struck her as something comical that Arthur Darrell of all men in the world should be a deliberate trespasser on her property; and her involuntary smile must have betrayed something of what passed through her mind, for he coloured, and said "he did not know what she would think of him, but that his only excuse was his unwillingness to turn Charly back again when they were half-way to Cranfield."

She replied, "that it did not the least signify. Whether my uncle would think it good example for Master Charly," added she playfully, as the little boy wandered out of the room into the hall, "is a question for his papa to consider."

"I am afraid," answered Darrell, "that

you are right there ; but you must give me credit for my discretion in not confiding to Charly how I came to be so perfectly familiar with the field path. I made acquaintance with it twenty years ago, and many were the expeditions Henry Darrell and I made to your Uncle Wentworth's orchard here, not exactly entering it, but clambering up and possessing ourselves of certain celebrated pears that hung over the wall. So far as that orchard wall," he continued, "my knowledge, acquired in predatory times, stood me in stead, but I was indebted to Charly for finding the gate ; and I should say he seemed as well able to make his way wherever he has a mind to go, as many a boy twice his size."

After this, the conversation began to flag,

and Miss Wentworth was debarred from a resource very commonly employed when that misfortune occurs during a first visit ; for it would have been embarrassing to have shown Darrell over the house and grounds he had been so near possessing ; and when she had once learnt that her uncle and all the Thorntons were well, something so awkward, so disagreeable, pressed on both hostess and guest, that it is hard to tell how they could have made out the space of an ordinary call, had not Charly come to the rescue with an entreaty to be allowed “ to show his papa the guinea-pigs, &c. Alice was only too glad ; and all three set forth to see the “ Cranfield Lions,” or what Charly looked on as such. This got over the time, and they conversed more easily ;

but as they returned into the library, Miss Wentworth happened to ask Darrell whether he had shot many birds the day she left her uncle's ?

“No, not many,” replied he.

“Only two !” cried Charly, in a compassionate tone ; “and poor papa was out so long—till it was nearly dark—and he was so tired !”

“There is nothing more tiring than a run of bad luck,” observed he ; and begged immediately to have the pony brought round.

Charly was put into the saddle as soon as Tortoise appeared ; but he and his father had scarcely started, when they turned back again, the former having suddenly recollected that “Aunt Mary” had given him a message

for "Aunt Alice," which was to ask if she could ride over to Darrell Place next day in time for luncheon. She accepted the invitation, on which Charly exclaimed joyfully:

"Aunt Alice will come to see us tomorrow, papa!" and again threw his arms round her neck, kissing her so eagerly that she could hardly escape from his demonstrations of affection.

"I do not think Charly is ungrateful," said his father, as he led him away.

The visit had been an embarrassing one; yet when the pair had departed, the house felt lonely; and Miss Wentworth was glad to recollect (as she did soon after) that she had promised to go to the village school, where she knew she was likely to be

detained during the remainder of the afternoon.

The following day, Charly and his father stood on the steps of Darrell Place to receive her as she rode up: the latter (for the first time since he had been in England) helping her to dismount.

In the course of her visit, Mrs. Thornton told Alice that her uncle had asked Arthur to prolong his stay by another month, and that he had agreed to do so.

"I cannot help its coming across me sometimes, Alice," continued she, after saying a good deal in Arthur Darrell's praise, "that could we have foreseen what a sober-minded, quiet man he would become, and that not under the most favourable circumstances, I, for one, should have given

you different advice to what we all gave you near ten years ago. One could not, with the sight of him as he then was, recommend a girl to venture her happiness on the chance of his reformation. But when one sees him so devoted as he is to that little boy, one cannot but wish he had a wife who was more suitable every way; for it is not only that she is a person one cannot visit, which is grievous enough, but, I do not know—it is impossible to be certain—yet some things have lately given me an unpleasant impression about them. Do you know, he has only written once to the continent since I have been back, though he has had several letters with the Lausanne post-mark; which is not right of him, I must allow. Then the other day,

just after my uncle had asked him to stay on, I heard him say to that brother-in-law of his 'that he should write and tell Emily she and the children need not wait for him to make their move to Nice (where they are to spend the winter); but as she has it in her power, she had better join parties with Mr. and Mrs. Hargrave' (those elderly people you must have seen at his mother's formerly—they have visited the Arthur Darrells abroad). Now I have no doubt she can make the journey as safely with Mr. and Mrs. Hargrave as with Arthur; and I am far from thinking him obliged to hurry back on that account, enjoying being in England too so much as he does. But there was something in his manner, in his way of speaking of her; and the whole thing struck me as

so—I do not know how to describe it—but so different to what you would expect from seeing him with little Charly!—and as he is evidently much changed for the better, I should fear she must be a very unamiable person. I am extremely sorry for him.”

“I wish,” said Miss Wentworth, “I could think poor Charly had a chance of being well brought up; but as far as I am concerned, Mary, I have no doubt all was ordered for the best.”

“If you think so, of course it is,” replied Mrs. Thornton; “though looking to *his* happiness, one cannot but wish things had gone otherwise.”

The conversation was here interrupted;

it was luncheon-time soon after ; and other subjects, including the Farnden pic-nic, were discussed during the remainder of Alice's visit.

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